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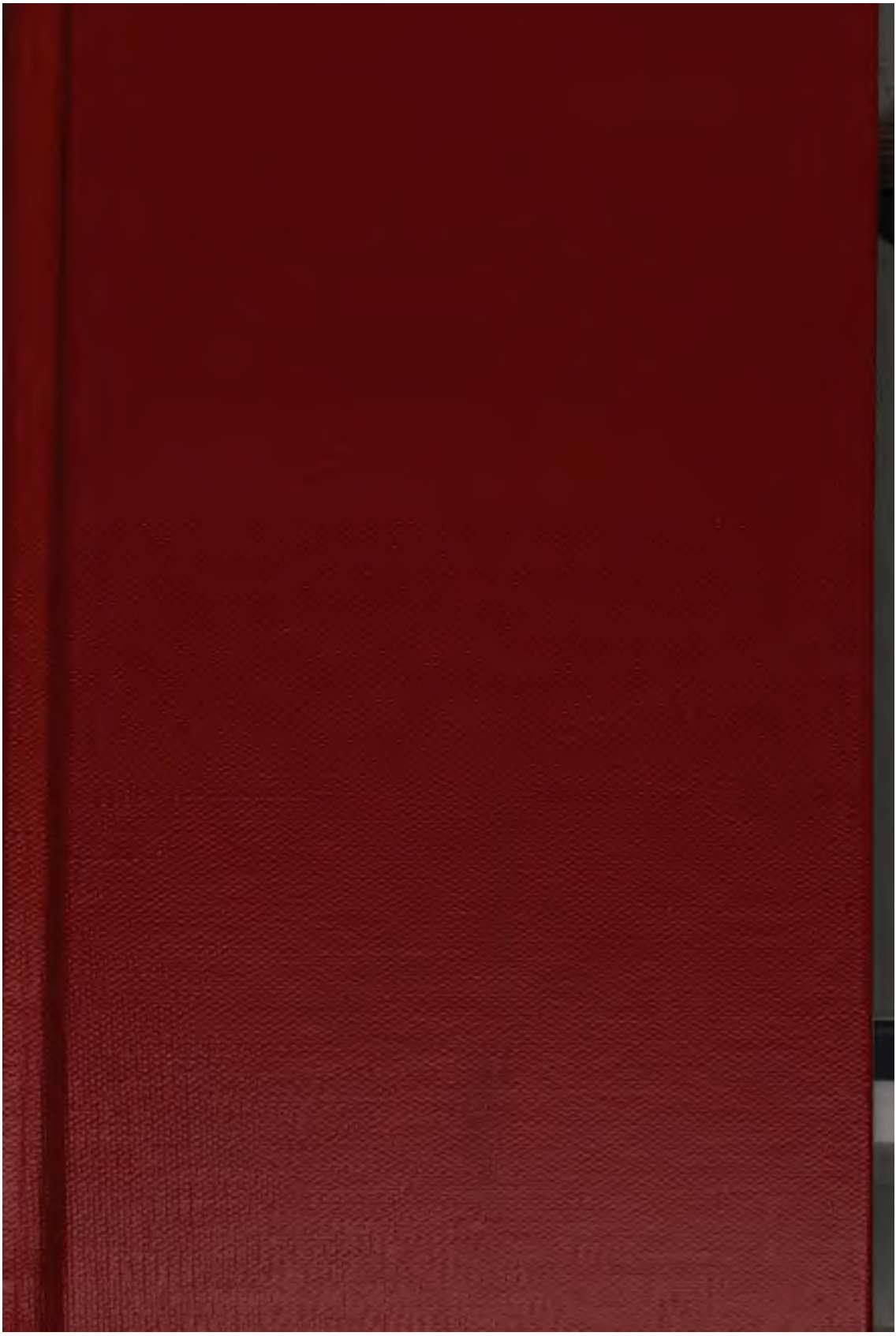

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TRANSLATED BY MEMBERS OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

YET SHALL NOT THY TEACHERS BE REMOVED INTO A CORNER ANY MORE, BUT THINE EYES SHALL SEE THY TEACHERS. *Isaiah* XXX. 20.

OXFORD,
JOHN HENRY PARKER;
F. AND J. RIVINGTON, LONDON.
MDCCCXLV.

TO THE

MOST REVEREND FATHER IN GOD

WILLIAM

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Gregorius I

MORALS

ON

THE BOOK OF JOB,

BY

S. GREGORY THE GREAT,

THE FIRST POPE OF THAT NAME,

TRANSLATED,

WITH NOTES AND INDICES.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II. PARTS III. AND IV.

OXFORD,
JOHN HENRY PARKER;
F. AND J. RIVINGTON, LONDON.
1845.

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Job 12, 6. Hist. by blessed Job, who is called 'Grieving,' are denoted the sufferings of our Lord and of His Body, i. e. the holy Church, and that his friends bear the likeness of heretics, who, as we have often said already, whilst they strive to defend, only offend God; and these, whilst they falsely abet, forcibly wound the souls of Saints. Yet not that in all which they say they are void of understanding in knowledge of the truth, but for the most part they blend what is wise with what is foolish, and the true with the false; that while they first propose somewhat on the side of truth, they may easily draw aside into falsehood. And hence too, what the friends of blessed Job utter is one while worthy of contempt, and at another time deserves admiration, which same the holy man whilst sometimes discarding he condemns it, sometimes approving admits, and turns to the account of righteousness even the very things, which, though right, are not by them rightly delivered; and so he scorns them, when they scorn his destitution, and, placed upon a dunghill in the body, he shews on how high a summit of virtue he is seated within, when he records that this life's riches are nought, which he describes to be abundantly bestowed even on the sons of perdition, saying;

Ver. 6. *The tabernacles of robbers have plenty, and they provoke God with boldness; when He hath given all into their hand.*

ii. 2. It is easy for a man, at the time, to despise riches, when he has them, but it is hard to hold them worthless, when he lacks them. Hence it is clearly shewn, how great a contempt of earthly things was lodged in the breast of blessed Job, who then declares that all is nought which the lost enjoy in plenty, at the time when he had lost every thing. Thus he says, *The tabernacles of robbers have plenty, and they provoke God with boldness;* for it very commonly happens that bad men set themselves up the more against God, even the more they are enriched by His bounty contrary to their desert, and they that ought to be impelled by good gifts to better conduct, are rendered worse men by the blessings.

3. But we have to make out how they are called 'robbers,' whereas it is thereupon added, *When He hath given all into*

their hands. For if they are robbers, then they took by force, and there is no doubt that God is no abettor of those that use force. In what sense then does He Himself bestow what they that are robbers carry off by wicked means? We are to know then that what Almighty God in His mercy vouchsafes is one thing, and another thing what in His wrath He suffers men to have; for that which robbers do contrary to right the Equal Dispenser no otherwise than justly permits to be done by them, that both the man who is let to rob being blinded in mind may increase his guilt, and that he who suffers from his robbing, may now in the mischief thereof be chastised for some sin, which he had been guilty of before. For look, a man taking post in the pass of a mountain lies in wait for travellers passing by; now he that is taking his journey perchance has done some wickedness at one time or another, and Almighty God requiting him his evil-doing in the present life, and giving him into the hands of the lier-in-wait, suffers him either to be spoiled of his goods, or even to be killed. And so what the robber unjustly aimed at, the same the Equitable Judge justly permitted to be done, that both the one might be repaid what he had done contrary to justice, and the other might one time or another receive the worse chastisement, by whose voluntary deed of atrocity Almighty God brought just vengeance for sin upon the head of another. He is cleansed that suffers the wrong: in the case of him that does the wrong guilt is accumulated; that either from the very depth of wickedness he may one day be brought back to repentance, or else be visited with eternal damnation, aggravated in proportion as he was borne with for long in his sin. With the first He deals in mercy that he may bring his sins to an end, with the other in severity that he may greatly add thereto, unless he betake himself to repentance; in the one evil deeds are wiped away while he suffers violence, in the other they are accumulated while he offers it. Therefore it is meet and right that Almighty God suffer that to be done which He forbids to be done, that by the very same act, whereby He now awaits and bears with the unconverted for long, He may one day smite them the worse. Therefore it is rightly said, *The tabernacles of robbers are in plenty, and*

Job 12, 7. 8. 9. Moral. *they provoke God with boldness; when He giveth all into their hand;* for what the wicked take away, He does Himself give them, Who might have withstood them in their rapine, if He had been minded to pity them.

4. Yet this may likewise be understood of spiritual things. For it very often happens that some have gifts of teaching vouchsafed them, yet they are swoln with the same, and have a desire to appear great by comparison with others. And to 'provoke' Almighty God is to be lifted up amongst our neighbours on the score of His gifts. Which same also are not unjustly called 'robbers,' in that whilst they speak what they never do, they take away the words of the righteous to serve the turn of their own speech. But because those very words heavenly Grace vouchsafes to some persons, whose lives notwithstanding it leaves in a course of wickedness, in themselves they are 'robbers;' but yet the good that is theirs they have gotten from above. It goes on;

Ver. 7, 8. *But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee. Or speak to the earth, and it shall answer thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.*

iii. 5. What are we to understand by 'the beasts,' but men of slow parts; and what by 'the fowls of the air,' but those that are skilled in high and sublime truths? For of 'the beasts,' Ps. 68, 10. i. e. the dull of sense, it is written; *Thine animals*[1] *shall dwell therein.* And forasmuch as those, who have minds for sublime themes, soar among the words of the Redeemer, it is Mat. 13, 32. written, *So that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.* And what by 'the earth,' saving men whose taste is for earthly things? Hence too it is said to the Gen. 3, 19. first man on his forsaking the things of heaven, *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* What are we to understand by 'the fishes of the sea,' but the inquisitive ones Ps. 8, 8. of this world, concerning whom the Psalmist saith, *The fish of the sea, that pass through the paths of the seas.* Which same busy themselves in large researches into things, as it were in undiscoverable floods. Now what all these teach upon being so interrogated, he adds, saying,

Ver. 9. *Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?*

[1] V. so

6. As if he said in plain terms; 'Whether you ask the dull of understanding, or persons full of the loftiest subjects, or those devoted to earthly ways, or the men busied with investigations that belong to this world, all of them acknowledge God to be the Creator of all things, and with one consent agree about His Power, though they do not with one consent live in submission to it. For that which the righteous man speaks by his way of living too, that the unrighteous man generally is constrained to own concerning God by his voice alone, if not otherwise; and it comes to pass that evil-doers, by attesting Him, do homage to the Creator of all things, Whom by their deeds they rebel against, in that Him, Whom they have dared to fight against by their lives, they cannot deny to be the Creator of all things. Yet this same may also be understood to good purpose after the mere form of the letter alone; in that every creature, when it is looked at, as it were utters a voice of its own, bearing witness by that mere form which it has. We ask 'the beasts,' or 'the fowls of the air,' 'the earth,' or 'the fish,' whilst we view them, and these answer us with one accord, that 'the Hand of the Lord hath wrought all things,' in that whilst they present their lineaments to our eyes, they bear witness that they are not from themselves. For by the mere circumstance that they are created, by the figure they present, they render as it were the voice of confession to their Creator, Who, as He created all things, likewise ordained how they should be conducted. Hence it is added, Book XI. iv. Lit.

Ver. 10. *In Whose Hand is the soul of every living thing, and the spirit of all flesh of man.*

7. For by the 'Hand' Power is denoted. Thus 'the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind,' is in the Power of Him, from Whom it has its being, that He Himself should appoint in what condition it should be, Who vouchsafed that to be, which was not. But by 'the soul of every living thing' may be denoted the life of beasts. Now Almighty God quickens the soul of beasts to the extent of the corporeal senses, but man's spirit He draws out to a spiritual understanding; and thus 'in His Hand is the soul of every living thing and the breath of all flesh of men,' in that both in the one, He bestows this power on the soul that it should v.

Job 12, 11. Lit. give life to the flesh, and in the other He quickens the soul to this degree, that it should attain to the understanding of eternity. But we are to bear in mind that in Holy Writ 'the spirit of man' is wont to be put in two ways. For sometimes 'the spirit' is put for the soul, sometimes for spiritual agency. Thus 'the spirit' is put for the soul, as it is written of our own Head Himself, *And He bowed His Head, and gave up His Spirit*[1]. For if the Evangelist had called any thing else 'the spirit' saving the soul, then surely upon that spirit departing, the soul would have remained. Moreover, the term 'spirit' is used for spiritual agency, as where it is written, *Who maketh His Angels spirits, His Ministers a flaming fire.* For Preachers are occasionally called 'Angels,' i. e. 'bearers of tidings,' in Holy Writ, as where it is said by the Prophet, *The priest's lips keep knowledge, and they seek the law from his mouth: for he is the Angel*[2] *of the Lord of Hosts.* Thus Almighty God 'maketh His Angels spirits,' in that He changeth His Preachers into spiritual men. But in this passage, if by 'the soul of every living thing,' the mere life of the body is denoted, by the 'spirit of all flesh of man,' there is set forth the agency of a spiritual understanding. It goes on;

John 19, 30. [1] *spiritum*, Vulg.

Ps. 104, 4.

Mal. 2, 7.

[2] V. *Angelus*

Ver. 11. *The ear trieth words, and the mouth of the eater savour.*

vi. 8. There is scarce a person that is ignorant that the five senses of our body, viz. of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching, in all their operations of perceiving and discriminating derive the power of perception and discrimination from the brain. And whereas there is but one judge that presides within, viz. the percipient faculty of the brain, yet by their proper passages he keeps five senses distinct, God causing great marvels, so that neither the eye should hear, nor the ear see, the mouth take in scent, the nose taste, nor the hands smell; and whereas all things are determined by the one faculty of the brain, yet no one of the senses can do aught but what it received by the Creator's appointment. And so by these corporeal and external arrangements we are left to gather the interior and spiritual ones; so that by that which is open to the eye in us, we ought to pass on to the secret thing that is in us, and escapes our eyes. For we are

to observe, that whereas there is one Wisdom, it dwells in one man less, in another more. To one it gives this function, to another that; and in the manner of the brain, it uses ourselves like so many senses, that though in itself it bears no dissimilitude to itself, yet by us it is ever working different and dissimilar operations, so as for this man to receive the gift of wisdom, and that the gift of knowledge; one to have kinds of tongues, and another the grace of healing.

9. But in these words wherein blessed Job saith, *The ear trieth words, and the mouth of the eater savour*, he seems likewise to imply something about the Elect and the damned; for the words of wisdom, which the children of perdition hear, the Elect not only hear but taste too, that that should have a savour for them in the heart, which conveys no sound to the minds of the damned, but only to their ears. For it is one thing to hear food named only, and another thing to taste of it also; then the Elect so hear of the meat of wisdom, that they taste of it, in that what they hear is full of relish to them in their very marrow[1] from love; but the knowledge of the reprobate extends only to the cognizance of the sound, so that they hear indeed of virtues, but yet from coldness of heart they know nothing what a relish they have. By which same words blessed Job condemns the inexperience of his friends, and the presumption of all that are puffed up for their learning in wisdom, in that it is one thing to know somewhat concerning God, and another to taste with the mouth of understanding the thing that is known. Therefore it is well said, *Doth not the ear try words? and the mouth of the eater savour?* As if it were said to the presumptuous in plain words, 'The words of instruction, which came to you only so far as to the ear, to me touch the mouth[a] of understanding likewise in the inward savour.' But because a weak age, even when it hath a right sense, should not spring forth with incautious haste to preach, it is rightly added;

[1] medullitus

Ver. 12. *With the ancient is wisdom, and in length of days understanding.*

10. For these sayings are set fast in the root of wisdom, which by continuance in living, are also made strong by the practice of deeds. But because there are many to whom at vii.

[a] 'Fauces,' which means the part of the mouth toward the throat.

Job 12, 13. 14. Lit. once longer life is given, and yet no grace of wisdom vouchsafed, it is further shewn with propriety on whose decision the gifts themselves depend, whilst it is added;

Ver. 13. *With Him is wisdom and strength: He hath counsel and understanding.*

viii. 11. We not unfitly interpret these words of the Only-begotten Son of the Supreme Father, so as to understand Him to be Himself 'the Wisdom and Strength of God.' For Paul also bears testimony to our interpretation, in the words, 1 Cor. 1, 24. *Christ the Power of God and the Wisdom of God.* Who is ever 'with Him,' in that, John 1, 1. *In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* But God 'hath counsel and understanding;' 'counsel,' in that He orders His own matters, 'understanding,' in that He knows ours. By the naming of 'counsel' may also be denoted the mere delay of secret judgment alone, as that He is sometimes slow in striking offenders, not because the sin of bad men is not seen, but that their sentence of condemnation, which is delayed for the practising of penance, may seem as if out of counsel slow to issue forth. And so what the public declaration one day reveals without, that lay hid with the Almighty Lord in counsel before the world began. It proceeds;

Ver. 14. *If He break down, there is none that can build again: if He shut up a man, there is none that can open.*

ix. 12. Almighty God 'breaks down' the heart of man, when He forsakes it; He 'builds it up,' when He fills it. For He does not destroy man's soul by consummation of war, but by withdrawing Himself from it; in that when it is left to itself, it wants nothing to its own ruin. Whence it commonly happens, that when the heart of the hearer, in due of his sins, is not filled with Almighty God's grace, it is in vain that he is outwardly admonished by the preacher. For every mouth that speaks is but mute, if He does not utter a voice in the heart within, Who inspires the words that are admitted into the ears. Hence the Prophet saith, Ps. 127, 1. *Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.* Hence Solomon saith, Eccles. 7, 13. *Consider the work of God; for who can set him right whom He hath despised?* Nor is it strange, if the preacher is not attended to by the reprobate soul, since it sometimes happens that the Lord Himself, in the things which He

speaks, is withstood by the tempers of those that withstand Him. For hence it is that Cain could be admonished even by the voice of God, yet could not be changed, because as due to the sin of his evil heart, within God had already forsaken the soul, to which outwardly He addressed words to serve for a testimony. And it is well added, *If He shut up a man, there is none that can open;* in that every man, whereinsoever he does wrong, what else does he but make for himself a prison-house of his own conscience, that guiltiness of soul may oppress him even though no man accuse him without? And when by the judgment of God he is left in the blindness of his evil heart, he is as it were shut up within himself, that he may never find a place of escape, which he never deserves to find. For it often happens that there are persons who long to quit their bad practices, but because they are weighed to the ground by the burthen of them, being shut up in the prison-house of bad habit, they are unable to go forth of themselves. And there are some that anxiously desiring to visit their own offences with punishment, turn into worse offences what they reckon themselves to be doing aright; and it is brought to pass in a lamentable way, that what they take for their going out they find to be their imprisoning. Thus the reprobate Judas, when he inflicted death upon himself to spite sin, was brought to the punishment of eternal death, and repented of sin in a more heinous way than he had committed sin. Mat. 27, 5.

13. Therefore let it be said, *If He shutteth up a man, there is none that can open.* For as no man withstands His bountifulness in calling, so no one withstands His justice in forsaking; and so for God to 'shut up' is, not to open to those that are shut up; and hence it is said to Moses concerning Pharaoh, *I will harden his heart.* For God is said to harden the heart in executing justice, when He does not soften the reprobate heart in bestowing grace. And so He 'shuts up' the man, whom He leaves in the darkness of his own practices. For Isaac desired to open this shutting up to his first-born son, when he endeavoured to set him before his brother in blessing him. But the son whom the father desired, the Lord rejected; and him, whom the Lord desired, the father blessed even against his will; that he, who had sold his Exod. 4, 21; 7, 3. Gen. 27, 5. Ib. 25, and 34.

Job 12, 15. Lit. birthright to his brother for a meal, might not get the blessing of the first-born, which he had relinquished through a gluttonous appetite; who, whilst that aiming at earthly objects, following after transitory things, he desired to inherit the blessing, was rejected. For *he found no place for repentance, though he sought it with tears;* for tears have no fruit, which are spent on regretting with sighs things destined to perish. And so Isaac could not open even to his son, whom Almighty God by a just judgment shut up in the prison-house of his evil heart. It proceeds;

Heb. 12, 17.

Ver. 15. *If He withholdeth the waters, all things are dried up. If He sendeth them out, they will overturn the earth.*

x. 14. If 'water' be understood of knowledge for preaching, as when it is written, *The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the well-spring of wisdom as an overflowing brook;* when 'water is withheld, all is dried up,' in that if the knowledge of the preacher is withdrawn, the hearts of those that might have flourished in eternal hope, are forthwith 'dried up,' that they should remain in hopeless barrenness, whilst, in love with transitory things, they care not to look for those which shall abide. But if by the term of 'water' the grace of the Holy Spirit is denoted, as it is said by the voice of Truth in the Gospel, *He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water;* in which place the Evangelist immediately added, *But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe in Him should receive;* a suitable sense is laid open in these words wherein he saith, *Behold He withholdeth the waters, and all things are dried up;* in that if the grace of the Holy Spirit be withdrawn from the hearer's mind, the sense is at once 'dried up,' which already through hope seemed to be green in the hearer. But forasmuch as he does not mention 'water' but 'waters,' by the plural designation, he refers to the sevenfold grace of spiritual gifts, inasmuch as every one is filled, so to speak, with as many waters as he is replenished with gifts, of which it is fitly added, *Also if He sendeth them out, they will overturn the earth.*

Prov. 18, 4.

John 7, 38.

15. For what is 'the earth' taken for, but the sinner, to whom it is said in sentence, *Dust*[1] *thou art, and unto dust*

[1] Lat. *Terra*

shalt thou return? Thus the earth remains immoveable when the sinner scorns to obey the precepts of the Lord, when he erects the neck of pride, and shuts the mind's eyes to the light of truth. But whereas it is written, *His feet stood, and the earth was moved;* in that when Truth is rooted in the heart, the immoveableness of the mind is stirred; if the grace of the Holy Spirit, by bestowal from above, is infused according to the voice of the preacher, instantly the earth is 'overturned,' in that the obduracy of the guilty soul is changed from the stubbornness of its immobility, that it should afterwards bow down itself in weeping to the precepts of the Lord, as much as it aforetime erected the neck in swelling high against the Lord. For you may see that the earth of the human heart, when the water of God's blessing is poured upon it, afterwards gladly bears injuries, which before it outrageously inflicted; afterwards even gives its own, whereas before it even laid hands on the things of others; afterwards tortures the flesh by practising abstinence, whereas before, in the plenishing of the flesh, it let itself loose in the deadly gratifications of gross sensualities; afterwards loves its very persecutors, whereas before it refused to love even those that loved itself. When, then, the human soul watered by God's bounty begins to act contrary to what was its wont, 'the earth is overturned,' in that the part is put down, which before reared itself on high, and the face is lifted upwards, which was before weighed down deeply below.

Book XI.

Hab. 3, 6. sec. lxx.

16. It seems well in illustration of this point to bring forward Paul as one among many. Who when he was on his way to Damascus armed with letters against Christ, being on his journey watered with the grace of the Holy Spirit, was changed on the spot from that bloodthirsty purpose which he had, and afterwards received those strokes in Christ's behalf, which he was journeying with the intention of inflicting upon Christians; and he who before, when living after the flesh, strove to deliver the Saints of the Lord over to death, is afterwards rejoiced to offer the sacrifice of his flesh for the life of the Saints. Those cold-blooded purposes of cruelty are turned into the warmth of pity; and he that aforetime was a blasphemer and a persecutor, afterwards

Acts 9, 1.

1 Tim. 1, 13.

Job 12, 16. becomes a humble and compassionate preacher. He, who accounted it great gain to him to slay Christ in His Disciples, now holds 'Christ to be his life, and to die gain;' and so when He 'sendeth out the waters, the earth is overturned,' in that the mind of Paul, the moment he received the grace of the Holy Spirit, altered the fixture of his stubbornness and cruelty.

Lit. Acts 9, 1. Phil. 1, 21.

Contrary to which the Lord utters the complaint against Ephraim, by the Prophet, saying, *Ephraim is a cake under the ashes*[1] *not turned.* For a cake under the ashes, that hath ashes upon it, lays the cleaner side flat to the ground, and has the upper side the fouler, in proportion as it carries the ashes upon it. And so with the mind that harbours earthly thoughts, what else does it carry upon itself but a load of ashes? But if it will be 'turned,' the clean surface, which it had kept downwards, it brings back to the top, when it has shaken off the ashes that it had upon it. If therefore we shake off from the mind the ashes of earthly thoughts, as it were we 'turn the cake under the ashes,' that that bent of our mind may henceforth go to the rear, which the ashes of grovelling thought before overlaid, and the clean face come to the top, that our right bent of mind may not henceforth be surcharged with the weight of earthly desire. Which we can never do, except we be bedewed with the grace of the Holy Spirit, in that when Almighty God 'sendeth out the waters, they will overturn the earth.' It proceeds;

Hosea 7, 8. [1] V. 80.

Ver. 16. *With Him is strength and wisdom.*

xi. 17. A little above it had been said, *With Him is wisdom and strength;* but now it is said, *With Him is strength and wisdom.* For because Almighty God, when in the mystery of pitifulness He was made Man, first gave the lesson of mildness, and afterwards at the Judgment He shews what strength He is of; it is rightly done that in the place above Wisdom is mentioned before Strength, when the thing is spoken of the Only Begotten Son of the Father, *With Him is Wisdom and Strength.* But forasmuch as when He cometh to judge, He will appear in the terribleness of His power, and the damned being cast off, will manifest to His Elect in His everlasting kingdom, how He is 'the Wisdom' of the Father, it is rightly said in the subsequent sentence, that with Him is first 'strength' and then 'wisdom.' Thus in the

first words wherein he saith, *With Him is wisdom and strength;* he plainly shews, that what He taught in mildness how to believe, in the power of the Judgment He will exhibit in terribleness. But in the subsequent words, wherein He saith, *With Him is strength and wisdom;* He makes it clearer than the day, that He first destroys reprobate men in the Judgment by dint of power, and afterwards shines into the souls of the Elect with the perfect light of the eternal kingdom. But because before the day of final Judgment, He never ceases daily to judge the deeds of mortal men by His secret awards, He comes back to that which is done in this present time, where it is added; Book XI.

Ver. 16, 17. *He knoweth both the deceiver and deceived, He bringeth counsellors to a foolish end, and the judges to dulness.*

18. Whereas every man that strives to deceive his neighbour is wicked, and 'Truth' saith to the wicked, *I never knew you, depart from Me ye that work iniquity;* in what sense is it said here, that 'the Lord knoweth the deceiver?' But forasmuch as God's 'knowing' sometimes means His taking cognizance, sometimes His approving, He at once knows a wicked man, in that in taking cognizance He judges him, (for He would never judge any wicked man, if He did not take cognizance of him,) and yet He does not know a wicked person, in that He does not approve his doings. And so He both knows him, in that He finds him out, and knows him not, in that He doth not acknowledge him in a likeness to His own Wisdom. As it is said of any truthful man, that he does not know falsehood, not because, when any thing false is said even by others, he is too blind to find fault with it, but this very falsehood he at once knows in the tracing out, and knows not in the affection of the heart, so as not to do that himself, which he condemns the doing of in others. And it may often happen that persons, busy in artful contrivances, spread the nets of their wickedness for another's life, and when he, in ignorance of it, is seen to be taken by the snares, perchance it is questioned whether such things are seen from above, and men wonder, why it is, if God does see them, that He suffers them to be done. *But He knoweth the deceiver and the deceived.* For xii. Matt. 7, 23.

Job 12, 18. Lit. 'He knoweth the deceiver,' in that generally He sees former sins of his, and by a just judgment suffers him to fall into others also. 'He knoweth the deceiver,' in that, left in the hand of his own doings, He forsaketh him, that he may be precipitated into worse ones, as it is written, *He that is unjust let him be unjust still, and he that is filthy let him be filthy*[1] *still.* Moreover 'He knoweth the deceived' too, in that men often do evil things that they know, and therefore they are suffered to be 'deceived,' so as further to fall into evil things which they know not. However, this is used to be done to the deceived sometimes for their purifying, sometimes as the beginning of vengeance.

Apoc. 22, 11.

[1] Lat. *grow filthy*

19. *He bringeth counsellors also to a foolish end,* when they do any thing good even, with no good purpose, but are going after the recompensing of a temporal reward. For, if the Only-begotten Son of the Most High Father, because hereby, that He was made Man, He preached eternal truths, is therefore called the *Angel of great counsel,* we rightly interpret 'the counsellors,' those preachers, who furnish the 'counsel' of life to their hearers. But when any preacher preaches the truths of eternity for this, that he may acquire temporal gains, assuredly he is 'brought to a foolish end,' in that he is aiming to reach that point by laborious effort, whence he ought to have fled in uprightness of mind.

20. And it is rightly added, *And the judges to dulness.* For all that are set over the examination of other men's conduct, are rightly called 'judges;' but when he that has this oversight does not diligently examine the lives of those under his authority, nor acquaint himself whom he should correct, and how, 'the judge is brought to dulness,' in that he, who should have judged things that were ill done, never finds out those things which are to be judged. It proceeds;

Ver. 18. *He looseth the belt of kings, and girdeth their reins with a cord.*

xiii. 21. They that know how to regulate aright the motions of their members, are not unjustly called 'kings.' But when the mind is touched with pride on the grounds of that very continence, it very often happens that Almighty God, deserting its pride, suffers it to fall into uncleanness of practice. And so 'He looseth the belt of kings,' when in the case of

those who seemed to regulate their members aright, on account of the sin of pride he undoes the girdle of chastity. Now what is meant by 'a cord,' but sin? As Solomon says, *His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.* And because fleshly gratification has its dominion in the 'reins,' the strict Judge of the conscience, Who 'looseth the belt of kings,' 'girdeth their reins with a cord,' that, when the girdle of chastity is undone, then the gratification of sin should have dominion over their members, so that those whom pride pollutes in secret, He may shew even publicly to be as abominable as they are. It goes on, Book XI. Prov. 5, 22.

Ver. 19. *He leadeth the priests inglorious, and overthroweth the mighty.*

22. The great glory of the priest is the righteousness of those that are subject to him. Whence the excellent preacher saith well to his disciples; *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord?* But when the priests neglect the lives of their charge, and bring no fruit from their advancement before the presence of the Lord, what else is this but that they are called[b] 'inglorious?' Since before the strict Judge they do not then find glory, who do not now seek it out in the lives of those subject to their charge by urgency in preaching. And it is well said, *And overthroweth the mighty.* In that, when, by a righteous judgment, He forsakes the heart of those that rule, it does not look for the inward recompensing of the reward, and it is overthrown in that whereby it is deceived, so as to rejoice in temporal superiority instead of eternal glory. Therefore 'the mighty are overthrown,' in that while they lose sight of the real rewards of the heavenly country, they are brought to the ground here in their own pleasures. It goes on, xiv. 1 Thes. 2, 19.

Ver. 20. *Who changeth the lip of the truthful, and taketh away the instruction of the aged.*

23. When the priest does not do the good that he tells, even the very word of his lips is withdrawn from him, that he may not dare to speak what he does not practise; as where it is said by the Prophet, *But unto the wicked God saith,* xv. Ps. 50, 16.

[b] 'Dicuntur,' some Mss. read 'ducuntur,' 'are led.'

Job 12, 19. 20. Lit. Ps. 119, 43. ‘ *What hast thou to do, to declare My statutes, or that thou takest My covenant in thy mouth?* Whence also he beseeches, saying, *And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth.* For he reflects that Almighty God gives the word of truth to those that do it, and takes it away from those that do it not. He then that prayed that he might not have it ‘ taken out of his mouth,’ what did he else than pray for the grace of good practice? As if he said in plain words, ‘ Let me not go astray from good works, lest, while I lose the regularity of good living, I also part with the right rule of speaking.’ And for the most part the teacher, who ventures to teach what he neglects to practise, when he ceases to speak the good which he scorned to do, begins to teach his charge the evil things that he does, that, by the righteous judgment of the Almighty, that man may not henceforth have a tongue for a good theme, who will not have a good life; so that whilst his mind is inflamed with the love of earthly things, he should be ever speaking of earthly things. Whence ‘ Truth’ saith in the Gospel, *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.* Hence also John saith, *They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world.* Therefore it is well said, *Who changeth the lip of the truthful, and taketh away the instruction of the aged.* In that while they, who were aforetime ‘ truthful’ in preaching heavenly things, setting their affections on those of time, are sunk down to the same, ‘ the lip of the truthful is changed, and the instruction of the aged taken away;’ in that being in love with temporal things, they never follow the precepts of their predecessors, so as to be occupying the place of authority as if but for the fruit of pleasure, and for no good end of labour.

Mat. 12, 34. 35. 1 John 4, 5.

Proph. 24. Which nevertheless may be understood more plainly of the Jews, who before the Lord’s Incarnation were ‘ truthful,’ in that they believed that He was to come, and proclaimed the same; but when He appeared in the flesh, they denied that it was He. Therefore ‘ the lip of the truthful was changed,’ in that Him, of Whom they had told that He was about to come, they denied when present; ‘ and the

instruction of the aged was taken away,' in that they never followed in believing the things, which they remembered their fathers to have foretold. Whence too at the coming of Elijah it is promised, that he shall 'turn the hearts of the children to their fathers;' that 'the instruction of the aged,' which is now 'taken away' from the heart of the Jews, upon the Lord taking compassion on them, may then be brought back, when the children begin to understand that concerning the Lord, which their fathers foretold. But if by 'the aged' we understand likewise those same Jews, who, by the persuasions of unbelief, set themselves to oppose the word of 'Truth,' then 'the instruction of the aged was taken away,' when the Church consisting of the Gentiles, being indeed young, received it, as she saith by the Psalmist, *I understand more than the ancients.* And because she kept this same in practising it, in what way she came to understand more than the ancients, she makes plain, whereas she adds directly, *Because I keep Thy precepts.* For whereas she aimed to fulfil in practising that thing which she learnt, it was vouchsafed her to understand what she might teach. Whence it is still further added with propriety,

Book XI.

Mal. 4, 6.

Ps. 119, 100.

Ver. 21. *He poureth contempt upon princes, and lifteth up those that were oppressed.*

25. For whilst the Jewish people continued in the precept of the Law, and the whole Gentile world knew nothing of the precepts of God, both the former seemed to be as 'princes' by faith, and the latter lay borne down in the depth by unbelief. But when Judæa denied the mystery of our Lord's Incarnation, and the Gentile world believed it, both 'the princes' fell into contempt, and they that had been borne down in the sin of unbelief, were 'lifted up' in the liberty of true faith. But Jeremiah seeing this fall of the Israelites long before, says, *The Lord is become as it were an enemy; He hath swallowed up Israel; He hath thrown down all his palaces; He hath destroyed his bulwarks.* Now 'palaces' in cities are for ornaments, but the 'bulwarks' are for defence. And the gifts that keep us safe are one thing, those that ornament us are another. For prophetical teaching, different kinds of tongues, the power of working cures, are a kind of 'palaces' of the mind, which

xvi.

Lam. 2, 5.

Job 12, 22. Proph. though a man have not, yet he is able to stand fast defended by faith and righteousness, though he does not shew himself at all adorned with the towering height of the gifts of virtue; but faith, hope, and charity, are not our 'palaces,' but our 'bulwarks,' which, if we neglect to possess ourselves of, we lie exposed to the snares of the enemy. In the case of Judæa, therefore, seeing that He took away from her prophecy, and teaching, and miraculous signs, 'He overthrows all her palaces.' And because, for her hardness of heart, He let faith, hope, and charity, be taken away from her, He was bent to 'destroy her bulwarks.' Now we have the right order observed, in that the 'palaces' first, and then the 'bulwarks,' are described as destroyed, because, when the sinful soul is forsaken, first the gifts of miraculous powers, which were given in manifestation of the Spirit, are destroyed, and afterwards the foundations of faith, hope, and charity. All which, being taken away from the unfaithful, the Lord bestowed upon the Gentile world, and by the things, which He took from the unbelievers, He adorned the believers' minds. Whence it is written, *And to divide the spoils of the beauty of the house.* For when He took away from the Jews the spoils of the powers of virtue, He imparted the beauty of His gifts to the house of the heart of the Gentiles, which He deigned to dwell in by faith. Which same was brought to pass, when the words of God were on the one hand interpreted by the Jewish people after the mere 'letter,' which 'killeth,' and on the other, by the converted Gentiles penetrated in the 'spirit,' which 'maketh alive.' Whence it is directly added,

Ps. 68, 12.

2 Cor. 3, 6.

Ver. 22. *Who discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death.*

xvii. 26. For when the several mystical truths are recognised in the secret words of the Prophets by them that believe, what else is it, than that 'deep things are discovered out of darkness?' Whence too 'Truth' Himself, speaking in parables to the disciples, saith, *What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light.* For when by explaining we unravel the mystical knots of allegories, then we as it were 'speak in light, what we have heard in darkness.' Now 'the shadow of death' was the hardness of the old Law, which made every

Matt. 10, 27.

one that sinned liable to be punished with the death of the body. But when our Redeemer tempered by mildness the harshness of the sanctions of the Law, nor any longer ordained death of the flesh to be inflicted for sin, but shewed how greatly the death of the spirit was to be dreaded, then, surely, 'He brought out to light the shadow of death.' For this death, wherein the flesh is severed from the soul, is a 'shadow' of that death, wherein the soul is severed from God, and so 'the shadow of death is brought out to light,' when, upon the death of the spirit being understood, the death of the body is no whit feared. Which may likewise be understood in another sense also. For those are not unjustly called 'princes,' who with great judiciousness of counsel rule the thoughts of their hearts at all times, and by the power of wisdom keep down all the motions of folly. But it very often happens that the mind is in secret lifted up on the grounds of its very wisdom to the topmost pitch of pride, and is brought to the ground under those evil habits, over which it was rejoicing to have gained the victory. Therefore it is well said, *He poureth contempt upon princes.* But because it sometimes happens that they who appear to lie prostrate in evil ways have recourse to tears of penitence, and gather themselves up against the sins, to which they were subjected, it is fitly added, *And lifteth up those that were oppressed.* For there are some, who, being enlightened by the gift from on high, see in what exceeding filthiness of their sinful doings they lie grovelling, wash with tears the stains of their misdeeds, and henceforth keep down beneath them the motions of the flesh, by which they were aforetime weighed to the ground.

27. Which same is brought to pass by the excellent disposal of Almighty God, that so in this life every thing should be accounted uncertain, and no man be set up for possessing chastity, seeing that *He poureth contempt upon princes*, and no man despair from his evil habits weighing him down, seeing that *He lifteth up those that were oppressed.* And because, when these things are done, there is brought forth out of the secret counsels of God an open sentence upon each individual, it is rightly subjoined, *And revealeth deep things out of darkness.*

Job 12, 23. Moral. 28. For the Lord 'revealeth deep things out of darkness,' when He manifests an open sentence from His secret counsels, so as to shew what He thinks concerning each individual. For because now the Creator seeth all things, and Himself is not seen in His counsels, it is well said of Ps. 18, 11. Him by the Psalmist, *He made darkness His secret place.* But it is as if He issued out from that darkness into light, when He shews what are His thoughts concerning the actions of each individual. And whereas when he, who was sunk down by the weight of his sins, is brought to the setting up of uprightness, he for the first time sees that very death, wherein he was going on ruining himself, and at the same time too blind to take account of it; it is rightly added, *And bringeth out to light the shadow of death.* For 'the shadow of death' is evil doing, which is drawn as if in bodily lineaments by a copy of our old enemy. Concerning whom Rev. 6, 8. too, in the character of a certain one, it is said, *And his name was Death.* And it very often happens that his evil instigation escapes the minds of men, and by this circumstance, that it is not known, is the more successful. And so 'the shadow of death is brought to light,' in that the evil doing of our old enemy is revealed to the minds of the Saints that it may be made an end of. It goes on:

Ver. 23. *Who multiplieth the nations and destroyeth them, and them that are overturned He restoreth entire.*

xviii. Lit. 29. We may understand it, viz. that 'the Lord multiplieth the nations and destroyeth them,' in this way, that day by day men are born destined to die, and that 'them, that be overturned, He restoreth entire,' in that they, who were dead, shall rise again; which however we shall interpret in a better sense, if we think how it is that this is done in their souls. Proph. For 'He increaseth the nations and destroyeth them,' in that He both enlarges them by fruitfulness of offspring, and yet leaves them in their own infidelity; but 'them, that were overturned, He restoreth entire,' in that those, whom He had left in the downfall of infidelity, He one time or another reestablishes in the seat of faith. And these being restored in a whole state of mind, that ancient People, which seemed faithful to God, being reprobate was cast away in heart, so that, being deceived by its own misbelief, it should afterwards

rise up against Him, Whom it had before preached. It goes on; Book XI.

Ver. 24, 25. *Who changeth the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and deceiveth them, that they wander in vain where there is no way. They shall grope in the dark without any light, and He shall make them to stagger like a drunken man.*

30. For 'the heart of the chief of the earth was changed,' when the chief priests and elders of the people in Judæa set themselves to withstand Him by their counsels, Whom they beforehand proclaimed, that He was to come. And when they strove to put out His Name by persecuting Him, being deceived by their own wickedness they vainly essayed to 'wander where there is no way,' because it was impossible that a 'way' could be open to their cruelty directed against the Creator of all things. They saw the miracles, they were made to fear by His power[c], but refusing to believe, they still sought signs, whilst they said, *What sign shewest Thou then, that we may see and believe Thee?* Therefore it is well said, *They grope in the dark without light?* For he that hesitates in the midst of so many manifest miracles, as it were 'gropes in the dark,' in that he sees not what he is touching. But every man that 'staggers,' is borne now hither, now thither. And because they were shewn at one time to believe, as when they said, *If this man were not of God He could do nothing*, and at another time denied that He was from God, as when they said contemning Him, *Is not this the carpenter's Son? Is not His mother called Mary? and His brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us?* it is rightly added, *He maketh them to stagger like a drunken man.* For they saw both that He raised the dead, and yet that He was a mortal being. Who would not believe that He was God, Whom they beheld raise the dead to life? But on the other hand, when they saw that He was mortal, they scorned to believe that He was immortal God, and so herein, viz. that Almighty God manifested Himself such to their eyes as to be both capable of exhibiting divine signs and of xix. John 6, 30. John 9, 33. Mat. 13, 55. 56.

[c] 'virtute terrebantur.' A. B. C. D. M. and some ap. Ben. read 'virtutes mirabantur, terrebantur.' 'They wondered at His acts of power, they were terrified.'

Job 18, 1. Proph. undergoing human sufferings, He 'made them to stagger like drunken men,' that their pride, which chose rather to spurn the mystery of the Incarnation, than to follow it, should at one and the same time lift itself up against His human nature, and wonder at the power of His Divine nature shining within. And because all these were made present to the eyes of blessed Job by the spirit of prophecy, it is rightly added;

Chap. xiii. 1. *Lo, all!*

xx. Hist. 31. For what was to follow he saw as present in Him, Whom neither things future come to, nor things past go from; but all things are present at once and together before His eyes. And because the very things that were to come he saw were part in works and part in words, it is rightly said, *All this mine eye hath seen, mine ear hath heard.* But words are without use, if they lack the understanding of them. Whence it is fitly added, *And I have understood every whit.* For when any thing is shewn or heard, if the understanding of it be not bestowed, it is little of a prophecy. Thus Pharaoh saw in a dream things that were to come upon Egypt, but, because he could not understand what he saw, Dan. 5, 5. he was no prophet. King Balthasar 'saw the fingers of the hand that wrote' upon the wall; but he was no prophet, because he did not attain to the understanding of that thing which he saw. Therefore, that blessed Job might testify that he had the spirit of prophecy, he declares not only that he had 'seen and heard,' but also that he had 'understood all this.' And that he is not elated on the grounds of such understanding, his words subjoined bear witness, when he says,

Ver. 2. *What ye know, the same do I know also; I am not inferior to you.*

xxi. 32. By which same words he made known what exceeding humility he had, who says that he was 'not inferior' to them, whose life by holy living he very far surpassed. For he makes good that 'what they knew he knew,' who by knowing the things of heaven transcended their earthly thoughts through the spirit of prophecy in addition. It goes on;

Ver. 3. *Yet still I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.*

33. We 'speak with the Almighty,' when we beseech His pity; but we 'reason with Him,' when uniting ourselves to His righteousness, we sift our actions with minute investigation. Or otherwise, to 'reason with God,' is for him who obeyed His commandments here, to come with Him hereafter as Judge to judge the people. As it is said to the Preachers that leave all things, *Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* Whence the Lord saith by Isaiah too, *Relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together.* For it is right that they should reason with God concerning their charges[d] in the Judgment, who, at the words of God, entirely give up the present world. Thus the 'speaking' has to do with prayer, and the 'reasoning' has to do with judgment. Therefore the holy man 'speaks' to the Almighty now, that he may 'reason' with the Almighty hereafter, in that He cometh with God afterwards as a judge, who here in this present time was familar with Him in prayer. But Holy Church, whom we have already said that blessed Job bears the likeness of, not only then judges the wicked, when the day of final Judgment shall come, but even now doth not cease to judge all that either act wickedly, or think foolishly. And hence it is added;

Book XI. xxii. Matt. 19, 28. Is. 1, 17. 18.

Ver. 4. *First shewing that ye are builders of lies, and votaries of wrong doctrines.*

34. By which same words it is clearly shewn that his friends as in the likeness of heretics oppose the decisions of the holy man's judgment. For it is clear that they do not hold the figure of Catholics, who are termed 'votaries of wrong doctrines.' Wherein this likewise ought to be marked, that they are called 'builders of lies.' For as an edifice is 'built' with stones, so a lie is 'built' with words. For when there is not deceitful speech, but a meaning of truth, it is like a fortified mound, arising not by fabrication, but by nature. It goes on; xxiii.

[d] 'de pupillis,' lit. 'wards,' same word as 'fatherless' in our Version. Most Mss. read 'populis,' 'peoples,' but with an abbreviation.

Job 13, 5—8. Hist. xxiv. Ver. 5. *O that ye would altogether hold your peace, and ye should be accounted wise!*

35. As in a house, when the door is shut, it is not known what members there are hidden within, so, generally speaking, if a fool hold his peace, it is hidden whether he be wise or foolish, only, however, if no other works come to light, which may speak the mind even of one that is silent. For this reason the holy man, seeing that his friends were anxious to appear what they were not, charged them to hold their peace, that they might not appear what they were. And hence it is said by Solomon; *Even a fool when he holdeth his peace is counted wise.* But because when a fool speaks, from this, that he brings in his own words, he is unable to reflect on the words of the wise, after he had bidden silence, he yet further adds rightly,

Prov. 17, 28.

Ver. 6. *Hear now my reproofs, and hearken to the judgment of my lips.*

xxv. 36. Now he did well first to bring forward 'reproof,' and afterwards 'judgment.' For except by reproof first the swelling of the fool be put down, the judgment of the righteous is not by comprehension at all understood. It goes on;

Ver. 7. *Doth God need your lie, that ye should talk deceitfully for Him?*

xxvi. 37. God doth not 'stand in need of a lie,' in that Truth does not seek to be stayed up by the aid of falsehood. But because Heretics are unable to defend on principles of truth the things which they erroneously conceive about God, it is as if they sought for the shadow of falsehood, to shew the ray of light. And they 'speak deceitfully for Him,' in that weak minds, by being senselessly seduced, they deceive in the understanding of Him. It goes on;

Ver. 8. *Will ye take His person? will ye strive to judge for God?*

xxvii. 38. For when foolish men behold the doings of the wise, they all seem to them to be worthy of blame; who, forgetting their own emptiness and deficiency, pass judgment on the concerns of others the more eagerly, in proportion as they are more deeply ignorant of their own. But on the other hand, when the righteous reprove the deeds of the wicked,

ever conscious of their own weakness, they administer reproof, Book XI.
though in launching forth against them outwardly, yet in sympathizing with them inwardly; in that it belongs to Him alone to scrutinize the sins of men without fellow-feeling, Who by the omnipotence of His nature knows not to commit sin. Therefore, as the friends of blessed Job had so reproved his deeds as if they had nothing in themselves to be reproved, it is well said in this place, *Will ye take His face? Will ye strive to judge for God?* For to 'take the face of God' is to assume His authority in the act of judging; and he as it were 'strives to judge for God,' who when he reproves the several weak points in another, does not feel weak in himself within from fellow-feeling. It goes on;

Ver. 9. *Or shall it please Him, from Whom nothing can be concealed*[1]*? Or like as a man will He be deceived by your deceits.*

[1] *celare.*

39. Heretics shew God deceit in that they fabricate such things as cannot be pleasing to the very Being, in Whose behalf they say them. And whilst they set themselves as if to defend, they only offend Him, in that they are brought to the ground in[2] fighting against Him, Whom they appear by preaching to be serving. Hence it is said by the Psalmist, *That Thou mightest still the enemy and the defender*[e]. For every heretic is to Almighty God an 'enemy and defender,' for wherein he strives in his way to defend Him, therein he fights against His truth. But because nothing can escape God's sight, He judges according to that in them, which they think within their heart, but not by their appearing without to be doing Him service. Therefore since by their frauds 'as a man is deceived, God is not so deceived,' it is rightly added, xxviii.

[2] A.B.C. D. M. 'fall into.'

Ps. 8, 2.

Ver. 10, 11. *He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly take His face. Presently when He ariseth He shall make you afraid; and His dread shall fall upon you.*

40. This part, wherein He declares that 'the face of God is taken in secret,' may be understood in two ways. For there be some, who at one and the same time perceive truth in their hearts, and yet utter outwardly concerning God things that are false. For lest they should appear to be xxix.

[e] 'Defensorem.' E. V. 'avenger.' Vulg. 'ultorem.' LXX, ἐκδικητήν.

Job 13, 10. 11. Hist. subdued, they both know the truth within, and yet assail it without. Hence it is well said in this place, *He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly take His face.* As if it were expressed in plain words; 'Ye are the more to be blamed in His sight for falsehood, as ye see in yourselves what is true.' And there be some, who when they turn back into the interior, contemplate the justice and righteousness of God, and in praying and weeping tremble with fear, but after the hour of contemplation has passed by, they return with as much boldness to their wickednesses, as if, being placed behind His back, they were not seen by the light of His righteousness. And so these with themselves in secret 'take God's face' as if it saw with a bodily sight, in that both, when they are present to Him, they flatter Him with their tears, and, when they are as it were gone from His sight, they make slight of Him by their practices. And these deserve to be beaten more for their evil doings, even in proportion as in the secret of their hearts they know the righteous judgments of God. And hence it is added; *As soon as He stirreth up Himself, He will trouble you, and His dread shall fall upon you.*

41. Seeing that Almighty God is of a nature unchangeable, in the wrath of judgment He is not capable of being moved; but by the expression proper to man, of God's being 'moved,' is understood nothing else than that enforcement of His rule of righteousness, by which the wickedness of man is chastised. Now righteous men conceive a dread of God before His indignation is stirred up against them; they fear Him at rest, lest they should feel Him as moved. But, on the other hand, the wicked then for the first time fear to be smitten, when they are under the rod, and terror then rouses them from the sleep of their insensibility, when vengeance is troubling them. And hence it is said by the Prophet, *And only the vexing alone shall supply understanding to the hearing.* For when they have begun to be stricken in vengeance for the contempt and neglect of God's precepts, then they understand the thing that they heard. And the Psalmist saith, *When He slew them, then they sought Him.* Therefore it is well said, *As soon as He stirreth up Himself, He will trouble you, and His dread will fall upon you;*

Is. 28, 19.

Ps. 78, 34.

in that the hearts of the children of perdition have not fear producing repose, but punishment producing fear. It goes on; Book XI.

Ver. 12. *Your remembrances are like unto ashes.*

42. All that are conformed to this present state of being by an earthly temper of mind, mean, by all that they do, to leave the remembrance of themselves to the world. Some in the toils of war, some in the towering walls of edifices, some in eloquent books of this world's lore, they are eagerly toiling and striving and building up for themselves a name of remembrance. But whereas life itself runs on to an end with speed, what is there in it that will stand stedfast, when even its very self by nature running rapidly speeds away. For a breath of air seizes the ashes, as it is written; *The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff, which the wind scattereth away from the face of the earth.* And so the remembrance of fools is rightly compared to 'ashes,' in that it is placed there, where it is liable to be carried away by a breath of air. For howsoever a man may toil to achieve the glory of his name, he has placed his 'remembrance like ashes,' in that the wind of mortality hurries it away in a moment. Contrary to which it is written of the just man, *The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance.* For by the very circumstance, that he imprints his deeds upon the eyes of God alone, he sets firm the name of his remembrance in the eternal world. It goes on; xxx. Ps. 1, 4. Ps. 112, 6.

And your necks shall be brought down to the mire.

43. As the sight is used to be denoted by the eye, so is pride by the 'neck.' Thus 'the neck is brought down to the mire,' when every proud man is humbled in death, and the flesh that was lifted up rots in corruption. For let us contemplate how and like what the carcases of the rich lie in their graves, what that form of death is in the lifeless flesh, what the rottenness of corruption. And surely these were the very persons who were lifted up with honours, swollen with the things gotten by them, who looked down upon others, and exulted to stand as it were alone. Yet, while they never considered whereunto they were going, they knew nothing at all what they were. But 'the neck is brought down to the mire,' in that they lie neglected in rottenness, xxxi.

Job 13. 13. 14. Hist. who swelled high in emptiness. 'The neck is brought down to the mire,' because what the might of flesh is good for, the rottenness of corruption evidences. It goes on;

Ver. 13. *Hold your peace for a little, that I may speak whatsoever my mind shall bid me.*

xxxii. 44. He shews that they spoke with the perception of the flesh, whom he therefore binds to silence, that he may speak that which 'his mind bids him.' As if he said in plain words, 'I do not speak in a carnal, but in a spiritual way, because I hear by the perception of the Spirit things that I bring forth by the service of the body. Whence he at once mounts up on high, and lifts himself aloft in mysteries, and changes into mystical discourse the reproofs which he had delivered, saying,

Ver. 14. *Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in my hand?*

xxxiii Myst. 45. In Holy Scripture 'teeth' are sometimes used to be understood for the holy preachers, and sometimes for the interior senses[f]. Thus of the holy preachers it is said to the Bride, *Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing.* And hence it is said to one of them, when the Gentiles were represented to him in a figure, *Kill and eat*, i. e. 'crush their oldness, and convert it into the body of the Church, i. e. into your own members.' Again, that 'teeth' are wont to be understood of the interior senses, is testified by the Prophet Jeremiah, when he says, *He hath broken my teeth by number.* For by the 'teeth' the food is broken in pieces, to allow of its being swallowed. Hence we not unjustly understand the interior senses by 'teeth,' which as it were chew and mince small the several particulars that occur to the mind, and transfer them to the belly of the memory, which the Prophet declares to be 'broken by number,' in that according to the measure of each particular sin there is blindness of understanding engendered in our perception, and in proportion to that which each person has committed outwardly, he is made dull of sense in that, which he might have understood of the

Cant. 4. 2. Acts 10, 13. Lam. 3. 16.

[f] S. Thomas Aq. distinguishes four interior senses in men and animals, the same in both, with the difference that reason makes in them. Sum. Theol. 1. P. Quæst. lxxviii. Art. 4.

inward and invisible. Whence too it is rightly written, *Every one that hath eaten the sour grape, his teeth shall be numbed.* For what is 'the sour grape,' saving sin? for a 'sour grape' is fruit before the time. So whosoever desires to be satisfied with the enjoyments of this present life, is as it were in a hurry to eat fruit before the time. Thus 'the teeth of him that eateth the sour grape are numbed,' in that he who feeds in the gratification of the present life, has the interior perceptions tied fast, that they should no longer be able to eat, i. e. to understand spiritual things; in that from the very self-same cause that they gratify themselves in outward things, they are rendered dull in those of the interior. And whereas the soul is fed with sin, it is unable to eat the bread of righteousness, in that the teeth being tied fast by the custom of sin, can never at all chew such good, as has a relish in the interior. In this place then, because, as we have said, we understand 'the teeth' to be the interior perceptions, we ought to consider very heedfully what the righteous are wont to do. Who, commonly, if they detect in themselves any points of a carnal sort however slightly, going over these in the interior senses, vehemently prosecute them in their own person, afflict themselves with self-chastisement, and with excessive self-inflictions visit in judgment the very least things wrong in them, and condemn them by penitence. Which same they do for this reason, that in the sight of the eternal Judge, both they may themselves be found as far as may be without blame, and that those, who see them thus judge themselves, may be kindled to reform themselves from worse offences. And this blessed Job had done in the presence of his friends, who kept fast temporal glory, and extolled transitory blessings. Yet he could not bring their sense to see the usefulness of the scourge with which he was afflicted, that so they might bethink themselves that Almighty God not only bestows prosperity, but likewise brings down adversity upon us, when He is favourable. Whence he says well in this place, *Wherefore do I tear my flesh with my teeth?* As if he said in plain words, 'Why with my interior perceptions do I hunt out things carnal, if there be any such thing done in me, if

Job 13, 14. Hist. I cannot thereby benefit my spectators?' Where too it is fitly added,

And carry my life in my hand?

46. To 'carry our life in our hands' is to shew forth the bias of the heart in practice. For the righteous have this thing proper to them, that in all that they do, and all that they say, they not only seek their own increase, but the edification of their neighbours likewise. Sometimes they judge themselves in some point, that they may recall indolent hearers to the consideration of themselves. Sometimes they exhibit good works, that their spectators may be ashamed not to imitate what they see. For it is written, *That they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Which is in Heaven.* Thus he that exhibits the bent of his mind by his works, 'carries his life in his hand;' but when any good man, whether by judging himself or by exhibiting good works, furthers not his neighbour's welfare by what he has done, he returns to words of sorrow. Whence it is rightly said in this place, *Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth? and carry my life in my hand?* i. e. 'Why do I either judge myself strictly before men, or shew in practice what my heart is bent on, if I do not advance my neighbour's good either by passing judgment on my evil things, or exhibiting good ones?' But yet the righteous, even while they speak so, never give over setting their neighbour a good example. Hence blessed Job, still further exemplifying and exhibiting the excellence of patience before the eyes of his friends, saith,

Matt. 5, 16.

Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.

xxxiv. 47. There is no room for the virtue of patience in prosperous circumstances. He is really patient, who is at once bruised with misfortune, and yet not bowed down from the erectness of his hope. Concerning the temper of mind of the reprobate man it is written, *He will praise Thee, when Thou doest well to him.* Hereby, then, the righteous mind is distinguished from the unrighteous, that even in the midst of affliction the former acknowledges the praise to Almighty God, that he is not broken down together with his worldly fortune, does not fall together with the fall of outward glory, but hereby proves the more, what he was with worldly

Ps. 49, 18. Vulg.

goods, who even without worldly goods stands the stronger. It goes on;

Ver. 15, 16. *But I will rebuke mine own ways before Him. He also shall be my salvation.*

48. Whereas Paul the Apostle saith; *For, if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged*, the Lord is found to be our 'Salvation' Then, in proportion as our sin is now rebuked by ourselves, from fear of God. Whence the Elect are used never to spare their own sins, that they may find the Judge of sin rendered propitious; and they look to find Him hereafter truly their 'Salvation,' Whom they now strictly fear as their Judge. For, he that spareth himself now in sin, is not spared hereafter in punishment. So let him say, *But I will rebuke mine own ways before Him.* And what use and advantage results from such rebuking, let him add, *He also shall be my salvation.* It goes on; xxxv. 1 Cor. 11, 31.

For an hypocrite shall not come before Him.

49. Whereas we know that the Judge, when He cometh, will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on His left, with what reason is it now said, 'that the hypocrite shall not come before Him,' when, if he be among the goats, he will appear on the left hand of the Judge? But we are to bear in mind that we come before the Lord in two ways. One, whereby taking exact account of our offences here we punish and judge ourselves before Him with weeping. For as often as we recall to our perception the power of our Creator, we as often, as it were, stand before Him.' Hence too it is well said by Elijah, the man of God, *The Lord God of Israel liveth, before Whom I stand.* In another way we 'come before God,' when at the last Judgment we present ourselves before His Tribunal. And thus the hypocrite in the last reckoning does come before the Judge, but because now he shuts his eyes to consider and bewail transgressions, he refuses to 'come before' the Lord. For as righteous men, when they fix their eyes on the severity of the Judge that shall come, recall their sins to remembrance, bewail the things that they have done, and judge themselves severely that they be not judged; so hypocrites, as they outwardly please the world, hence omit to look inwardly into themselves, and wholly engross themselves in the words of their neigh- xxxvi. 1 Kings 17, 1.

Job 13, 17. 18. Hist. bours, and account themselves to be holy, because they consider that they are so accounted by their fellow-creatures. And when they have dissipated their mind in the words that sound their own praises, they never recall it to the cognizance of sin, never mark wherein they offend the interior Judge, entertain no fears concerning His severity, for they believe that they have pleased Him as they have their fellow-creatures. Yet if they but brought His terribleness to mind, this very circumstance, that fixed in a wrong bias they are making themselves pleasing to their fellow-creatures, would cause them to fear the more. Therefore it is well said, *For an hypocrite shall not come before Him;* in that he does not set before his eyes the severity of God, so long as he is ambitious to please the eyes of men. Who, if he set himself in the presence of God in searching his own conscience, would then assuredly no longer be a hypocrite. It goes on;

Ver. 17. *Hear my speech, and take in my riddles with your ears*

xxxvii. 50. Herein, that he names 'riddles,' he shews that he has parts of his speech framed in figures. Whence too it is fitly added by the voice of the faithful People;

Ver. 18. *If I shall be judged, I know that I shall be found just.*

xxxviii 51. Which too is not at variance with the person of the self-same blessed Job, since he is only telling that concerning himself without, which 'Truth' had inwardly declared to his enemy concerning him; *Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth?* And yet it is much less that the holy man records concerning himself, than what the Lord declared concerning him. For it is one thing to be 'just,' and another to have 'none like him.' Therefore he thought humbly of himself, who, whereas he was just beyond comparison with another, described himself not just above others, but simply able to be 'found just.' It seems however to furnish this ground for raising a question in his words, viz. that he who said above, *I will rebuke mine own ways before Him;* and again says

v. 26. further on, *Thou wouldest consume me in the iniquities of my youth;* and seeing his sins with a distinct eye, says

still further on, *My transgression is sealed up in a bag,* now saith, *If I shall be judged, I know that I shall be found just.* For it is impossible for sin and righteousness to meet together. But the holy man, attributing wickedness to himself, and the purifying of him to Almighty God, at once sees that he is a sinner in himself, and knows that he is made righteous by free gift. Who even in the midst of good practice earned in superabounding grace to have stripes put upon him. And he already rejoices to be 'found just' in Judgment, who beheld himself before Judgment smitten with the rod. Hence too when he says long afterwards, *My transgression is sealed up in a bag,* he adds directly; *but Thou hast healed mine iniquity.* He, then, that describes himself as 'found just' in Judgment,' says not at all that he is not justly smitten, although the Lord did not intend to obliterate sins by the scourge, but to increase his merits. It proceeds; Book XI. Job 14, 17.

Ver. 19. *Who is he that will plead with me? Let him come.*

52. Holy men so guard themselves in their good works, with God for their aid, that there can be no where found, without, grounds, whereon to accuse them; but within, in the secret thoughts of their own hearts, they watch over themselves with such good heed, that, if it might be, they may at all times stand blameless before the eyes of the interior Judge. But what they are able to effect, that they never should slip outwardly in act, they are unable to effect inwardly, that they never should make a false step in thought. For man's conscience, from the very fact that it withdraws[g] from the things deepest within, is always on slippery ground. Whence it comes to pass, that even holy men often slip in them. So let holy Job, speaking as well in his own voice as in the voice of the Elect, say, *Who is he that will plead with me? Let him come.* For, seeing that in external actions there is no occasion for which to fasten a blame upon him, he freely looks about for an accuser. But because the consciences even of the righteous sometimes have to charge themselves with foolishness of thought, it is on this account perhaps that it is added; xxxix.

g 'recedit,' but some read 'cecidit,' 'hath fallen.'

Job 13, 20. 21. *Why am I consumed in silence?*

Hist. xl. 53. For he is 'consumed in silence,' who, in blaming himself for foolishness of thought, is gnawed in his own heart by the tooth of conscience. As if he said in plain words, 'As I have so lived that I should never fear any accuser without, would that I had so lived that I should never have my conscience for mine accuser within me.' For he is 'consumed in silence,' who discovers in himself within cause whereby the fire should gnaw him[1]. It goes on;

[1] unde uratur

Ver. 20. *Only do not two things unto me: then will I not hide myself from Thy face.*

54. What are we to understand here by the 'face of God,' saving His visitation? In which, whilst He beholds, He also punishes our sins, from which no just man even is hidden, if the two things, which he entreats, be not removed; concerning which he adds;

Ver. 21. *Withdraw Thine hand far from me, and let not Thy dread make me afraid.*

xli. Proph. 55. By which same two what else does he ask in a voice of prophecy, but the season of grace and redemption? For the Law held the people obnoxious to the stroke of vengeance, that whoso committed sin under its yoke, should be forthwith punished with death. Nor did the Israelitish people serve God from a principle of love, but of fear. But righteousness can never be perfected[2] by fear, seeing that according to the voice of John, *perfect love casteth out fear.* And Paul comforts the children of adoption, by saying, ***For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*** Therefore in the voice of mankind, longing for the hardness of the stroke of the Law to pass away, and eagerly desiring to advance from fear to love, he names in prayer what 'two things God should put far from him,' saying, ***Withdraw Thine hand far from me, and let not Thy dread make me afraid;*** i. e. remove from me the hardness of the stroke, take away the weight of dread, and while the grace of love illumines me, pour upon me the spirit of assurance, in that if I be not removed far from the rod and from dread, I know that I shall not be withdrawn from the strictness of Thy searching. Since he cannot be justified before Thee, who

[2] impleri

1 John 4, 18. Rom. 8, 15.

serves Thee not on a principle of love, but of fear.' Hence he seeks the very presence of his Creator itself, as it were familiarly, and in a bodily sort, that he may thereby both hear what he is ignorant of, and be heard in the things that he knows. For he adds directly;

Ver. 22. *Then call Thou, and I will answer; or let me speak, and answer Thou me.*

56. Who at the time, when He did appear by the assumption of the flesh to the eyes of mankind, disclosed to men their sins, which they were doing and knew not. Whence it is added;

Ver. 23. *How many are mine iniquities and my sins? make me to know my crimes and my offences.*

57. Though the 'calling' and 'answering' may likewise be understood in another way. For God's 'calling' us is His having respect to us in loving and choosing us, and our 'answering' is the yielding obedience to His love by good works. Where it is fitly added, *Or let me speak, and answer Thou me.* For we 'speak,' when we beg for God's face in desire, and God answers our speaking, when He appears to us that love Him. But because whoever pants with longing for the eternal world, examines his doings, taking himself to task with great exactness, and searches lest there be aught in him, whereby he might offend the face of his Creator, he rightly adds, *How many are mine iniquities and my sins? Make me to know my crimes and offences.* This is the task of the righteous in this life, to find out themselves, and on finding out to bring themselves to a better state by weeping and self-chastening. And though John the Apostle tells us that there is no odds between iniquity and sin, when he says, *iniquity is sin;* yet in the simple usage of speech, 'iniquity' sounds something more than 'sin,' and every one confesses himself a 'sinner,' but he is sometimes ashamed to call himself an iniquitous person. Now between 'crimes' and 'offences' there is this difference, that 'crime' over and above exceeds the weight and measure of sin, but an 'offence' does not exceed the weight of sin; for thus, when a sacrifice is commanded to be offered under the Law, it is doubtless enjoined, as for a 'sin,' the same for an 'offence' too. And crime is never done but in deed, whereas offence is most

xlii.

1 John 3, 4.

Job 13, 23. Moral. Ps. 19, 12. commonly committed in thought alone. Hence it is said by the Psalmist, *Who can understand his offences?* seeing that sins of practice are known the quicker, in proportion as they appear externally, but sins of thought are the more difficult to apprehend, that they are committed out of sight. Hence any one, who being made solicitous by the love of Eternity, has it at heart to appear clean before the Judge that shall come, examines himself so much the more exactly now, in proportion as he bethinks himself how he may then present himself free to His terribleness; and he beseeches to have it shewn him, wherein he offends, that he may punish that thing in himself by penance, and by judging himself here, may be rendered unobnoxious to judgment.

58. But herein it is needful to observe, how great is the punishment of our pilgrimage which has fallen upon us, who have been brought to such a degree of blindness, that we do not know our own selves. We do evil, and yet do not quickly find it out, even when done. For the mind, being banished from the light of truth, finds in itself nothing else than darkness, and very often puts out the foot into the pit of sin, and knows it not. Which it is subject to from the blindness of the state of exile alone, seeing that, being driven away from the illumining of the Lord, it even lost the power to see itself, in that it loved not the face of its Maker. Hence it is added;

Ver. 24. *Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face, and holdest me for Thine enemy?*

xliii. 59. Man enjoyed the light of inward contemplation in Paradise, but by gratifying himself, as he departed from himself, he lost the light of the Creator, and fled from His face to the trees of Paradise, seeing that, after his sin, he dreaded to see Him, whom he had used to love. But mark, after sin he is brought into punishment, but from punishment he returns to love, because he finds out what was the consequence of his transgression, and that face, which he feared in sin, being awakened to a right sense, he seeks afresh by punishment, that he may henceforth flee the darkness of his blind condition, and shrink with horror from this alone, that he does not behold his Creator. Pierced with which longing the holy man exclaims, *Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face, and takest me for Thine enemy?* 'since, if Thou didst regard

me as a friend, Thou wouldest not deprive me of the light of Thy vision.' And going on, he adds the fickleness of the human heart, saying, Book XI.

Ver. 25. *Wilt Thou shew Thy power against a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt Thou pursue the dry stubble?*

60. For what is man but a leaf, who fell in Paradise from the tree? what but a leaf is he, who is caught by the wind of temptation, and lifted up by the gusts of his passions? For the mind of man is agitated as it were by as many gusts, as it undergoes temptations. Thus very often anger agitates it; when anger is gone, empty mirth succeeds. It is driven by the goadings of lust, by the fever of avarice it is made to stretch itself far and wide to compass the things which belong to the earth. Sometimes pride lifts it up, and sometimes excessive fear sinks it lower than the dust. Therefore seeing that he is lifted and carried by so many gusts of temptation, man is well likened to a 'leaf.' Hence it is well said too by Isaiah, *And we all have fallen as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away.* For 'our iniquity like a wind has taken us away,' in that being steadied by no weight of virtue, it has lifted us into empty self-elation. And it is well that, after a leaf, man should be called 'stubble' likewise. For he that was a 'tree' by his creating, was by himself made a 'leaf' in his tempting, but afterwards he appeared 'stubble' in his fallen estate. For in that he fell from on high, he was a leaf, but, whereas by the flesh he was fellow to the earth, even when he seemed to stand, he is described as 'stubble.' But because he lost the greenness of interior love, he is henceforth 'dry stubble.' So let the holy man reflect both what meanness man is of, and what severity God is of, and let him say, *Wilt Thou shew Thy power against a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt Thou pursue the dry stubble?* As if he openly bewailed, saying, 'Why dost Thou run him down with so much force of righteousness, whom Thou knowest to be so frail in temptation?' It goes on; xliv. Is. 64, 6.

Ver. 26. *For Thou writest bitter things against me.*

61. For seeing that every thing we speak passes away, but what we write remains, God is said not to 'speak,' but to 'write bitter things,' in that His scourges upon us last for long. For it was said once to man, when he sinned, *Dust* xlv.

Job 13, 26. *thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return?* And Angels many times appearing gave commandments to men. Moses, the lawgiver, restrained sins by severe means. The Only-Begotten Son of the Most High Father, Himself came to redeem us, He swallowed up death by dying, He announced that everlasting life to us, which He exhibited in Himself; yet that sentence which was given in Paradise concerning the death of our flesh remains unaltered from the very first beginning of the human race up to the end of the world. For Ps. 89, 48. *what man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?* which Ps. 76, 7. the Psalmist considering well saith again, *Thou, even Thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in Thy sight when once Thou art angry?* Who being 'once angry,' when man sinned in Paradise, fixed the sentence of the mortality of our flesh, which now even to the very last may never be changed a whit. Therefore let him say, *Thou writest bitter things against me.* Hence it is further added;

Moral.

And wouldest waste me with the iniquities of my youth.

xlvi. 62. Observe, that whereas the holy man finds not that he has ever sinned in his manhood[1], he dreads the sins of his youth[2]. Now it is necessary to know, that as in the body, so are there advances of age in the mind also. Thus the first age of man is infancy, when, though he lives in innocence, he cannot speak[h] the innocence which is in him; and then follows boyhood, in which he has henceforth the power of speaking what he wishes; to which youth succeeds, which we know is the first age in active life, which is followed by manhood, i. e. that which is suited to hardihood; and afterwards old age, which from mere time even is now fellow to maturity of mind. Therefore, as we have called the first age fit for good actions 'youth,' and as the righteous when they are far advanced in perfect maturity of mind, sometimes recall to recollection the beginning of their deeds, and blame themselves for their first commencement in an equal degree as they have advanced deeper in gravity of mind, because they find that they were once void of discretion, in proportion as they afterwards more thoroughly attain possession of the stronghold of discretion, it is rightly that now, in the words of

[1] juventute

[2] adolescentiæ

[h] In allusion to the etymology of the word 'infant,' i. e. 'not having utterance,' from 'in,' privative, and 'fari' 'to speak.'

the holy man, the sins of his youth are dreaded. But if this is to be held after the bare letter, we ought from this consideration to infer how grievous the sins of grown men and the aged are, if the just so greatly fear even that which they did wrong in the years of weakness. It goes on; BOOK XI.

Ver. 27. *Thou puttest my foot also in the stocks, and lookest narrowly into all my paths; Thou markest the prints of my feet.*

63. God 'set man's foot in the stocks,' in that he bound fast his wickedness with the strong sentence of His severity. And He 'looketh narrowly into all his paths,' in that He judges with minute exactness all the several particulars that belong to him. For a 'path' is usually narrower than a 'way;' but as by 'ways' we understand actions, so by 'paths' we not unjustly understand the mere thoughts of them. So God 'looketh narrowly into all our paths,' in that in all our several actions He takes account of the thoughts of the heart too; and He 'marketh the prints of our feet,' in that He examineth the intentions[1] of our works, how far they are placed aright, lest that which is done a good work, be not done with a right object. But it is possible that by the prints of the feet the several things done badly may be understood. For a foot in the body is a print in the way. And very commonly, when we do some things wrong, whereas our brethren see it, we are setting them a bad example, and our foot being as it were turned out of the way, we leave to those that follow our footsteps all awry, while by our own deeds we lead the way for other men's consciences to stumble. But it is very hard for man to keep on his guard, that he never presume to do evil, that in his good actions he be not unsteady in the intention, and amidst upright deeds let no wrong purpose deceive him. Yet all these particulars Almighty God minutely examines, and weighs each one of them in judgment. But when can man, bound about as he is by the frailty of the flesh, have power to rise up against all of them with exact particularity, and to maintain the line of uprightness with the thought of the heart unmoved? Hence it is properly added; xlvii.

Ver. 28. *Who am as a rotten thing to be consumed, and as a garment that is moth eaten.*

[1] Which he often considers to be represented by the putting forth of the foot.

Job 13. 28. Moral. xlviii. 64. For as a garment is eaten by the moth sprung out of itself, so man containeth rottenness in himself, whereby he consumeth, and that which he is, is that whereby he consumeth that he should not be. Which may be taken in another sense also, if it be said in the voice of man when tempted; *And I as a rotten thing am to consume, as a garment that is moth eaten.* For man 'as a rotten thing consumeth,' in that he is wasted by the corruption of his flesh. And because impure temptation springs up to him from no other source than from himself, like a moth, temptation consumes the flesh, as a garment from which it issues. For man contains in himself the occasion whence he is tempted. Therefore as it were 'the moth consumeth the garment,' whilst it proceeded from that very same garment. However, we ought to bear in mind that the moth digs its way through the garment without any sound, and it very often happens that thought pierces the mind in such a way, that the mind itself is not sensible of it, until after it has been pierced by its sting. Therefore it is well said that man 'consumeth like a garment that is moth eaten,' for sometimes we do not know the wounds of temptation, unless after we be pierced thereby within our souls. Which same frailty of ours the holy man yet further considering justly adds;

Chap. xiv. 1. *Man that is born of a woman liveth a short time, and is full of many miseries.*

xlix. Gal. 4, 4. Eccles. 42, 14. 65. In Sacred Writ 'woman' is taken either for the sex, or else for 'frailty.' For the 'sex,' as where it is written, *God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law.* But for frailty, as where it is said by the Wise Man, *Better is the iniquity of a man than a woman doing well.* For 'a man' is the term for every strongminded and discreet person, but 'a woman' is understood of the weak or indiscreet mind. And it often happens that even the discreet person suddenly falls into a fault, and that another weak and indiscreet man exhibits good practice. But he that is weak and indiscreet is sometimes lifted up the more on the score of what he has done well, and falls the worse into sin; but the discreet person even from that which he sees that he has done amiss, takes occasion to recall himself with closer application to the rule of strictness, and advances the further in righteousness

from the same act, whereby he seemed to have fallen from righteousness for a time. In which respect it is rightly said, *Better is the iniquity of a man than a woman doing well;* in that sometimes the very fault of the strong becomes occasion of virtue, and the virtue of the weak occasion of sin. In this place then by the name of 'a woman,' what else but 'frailty' is denoted, when it is said, *Man that is born of a woman?* As if it were said in plainer words, 'What strength shall he have in himself, who was born in frailty?' Book XI.

66. *Liveth a short time, and is full of many miseries.* Observe by the holy man's words we have the punishment of man briefly set forth, in that he is at once stinted in life and filled out in misery. For if we consider with exactness all that is done here, it is punishment and misery. For to minister to the corruption of the flesh by itself in things necessary and permitted is misery, in such measure that clothing should be sought out against cold, food against hunger, coolness against heat. That the health of the body is kept only with great care, that even when kept it is lost, when lost it is recovered not without great difficulty, and yet after being restored is always in risk; what else is this than the misery of the life of mortality? That we love our friends, mistrusting lest they may be offended with us; that we dread our enemies, and truly are not secure touching those whom we dread; that we often talk to our enemies as confidentially as to friends, and often take the sincere words of our friends, and those, perhaps, that love us very much, as the words of enemies; and that we, who wish never either to be deceived or to deceive, err the more by our caution; what, then, is all this but the misery of man's life? That after the heavenly country has been lost, banished man is delighted with his exile, that he is weighed down with cares, and yet shuts his eyes to considering how great the burthen is, in that he is full of a multitude of thoughts; that he is deprived of the interior light, and yet in this life wishes to prolong his state of blindness; what else is this but misery, the offspring of our punishment? Yet though he desire to stay here for long, still he is driven on by the mere current of his mortal life to depart out of it. Hence the holy man rightly adds;

Ver. 2. *He cometh forth like a flower, and is crushed: he fleeth also as a shadow, and never continueth in the same state.*

Job 14, 2. Moral. 1. 67. For, 'as a flower, he cometh forth,' in that he shews fair in the flesh; but he is 'crushed,' in that he is reduced to corruption. For what are men, as born in the world, but a kind of flowers in a field? Let us stretch our interior eyes over the breadth of the present world, and, lo, it is filled as it were with as many flowers as there are human beings. So life in this flesh is the flower in grass. Hence it is well said by the Psalmist, *As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.* Isaiah too saith, *All flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof is as the flower of the field.* For man cometh forth like a flower from concealment, and of a sudden shews himself in open day, and in a moment is by death withdrawn from open view into concealment again. The greenness of the flesh exhibits us to view, but the dryness of dust withdraws us from men's eyes. Like a flower we appeared, who were not; like a flower[1] we wither, who appeared only in time.

Ps. 103, 15. Is. 40, 6. [1] one Ms. 'like grass.'

68. And whereas man is daily being driven into death moment by moment, it is rightly added, *He fleeth also as a shadow, and never continueth in the same state.* But as the sun is unceasingly going through his course, and never stays himself in a state of stedfastness, why is the course of man's life likened to 'a shadow' rather than to the 'sun,' excepting that, when he parted with the love of the Creator, he lost the heat of the heart, and remained in the coldness of his iniquity alone? Since according to the voice of Truth, *Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.* He, then, who hath not warmth of the heart in the love of God, and yet keepeth not the life, which he loves, assuredly he 'fleeth like a shadow.' Hence it is well written concerning him, *that he hath followed a shadow.* Now it is well said, *and never continueth in the same state.* For whereas infancy is going on to childhood, childhood to youth, youth to manhood, and manhood to old age, and old age to death, in the course of the present life he is forced by the very steps of his increase upon those of decrease, and is ever wasting from the very cause whence he thinks himself to be gaining ground in the space of his life. For we cannot have a fixed stay here, whither we are come only to pass on; and this very circumstance of our living is to be daily passing out of life. Which same flight the first man could not have known before

Matt. 24, 2. Ecclus. 34, 2.

the transgression, seeing that times passed, himself standing. But after he transgressed, he placed himself on a kind of slide of a temporal condition, and because he ate the forbidden fruit, he found at once the failure of his stay. Which liability to change man suffers, not only without, but also within him, when he strives to arise to better works. For by the weight of its changeableness the mind is always being driven forwards to some other thing than it is, and, except it be kept in its stay by stringent discipline in self-keeping, it is always sliding back into worse. For that mind which deserted Him, Who ever standeth, lost the stay in which she might have continued. Book XI.

Henceforth now when he strives after better things, he has as it were to strain against the force of the stream. But when he relaxes in his bent to ascend, without effort he is carried back to the lowest point. Thus whereas in ascent there is effort, in descent rest from effort, the Lord warns us that we have to enter by a narrow gate, saying, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate;* for when about to mention 'the entering in of the narrow gate,' He premised, *Strive*, since unless there be an ardent striving[k] of the heart, the water of the world is not surmounted, whereby the soul is ever being borne down to the lowest place. And so whereas man 'springeth up like a flower and is cut down, and fleeth also as a shadow, and never continueth in his place,' let us hear what he further subjoins in this train of reflection. It goes on; Luke 13, 24.

Ver. 3. *And dost Thou deign to open Thine eyes upon such an one, and to bring him into judgment with Thee?*

69. For he surveyed above both the power of Almighty God and his own frailty; he brought before his view himself and God, he considered Who would come into judgment, and with whom. He saw on the one side man, on the other side his Creator, i. e. dust and God; and he rightly exclaims, *Dost Thou deign to open Thine eyes upon such an one?* With Almighty God, to open the eyes is to execute His judgments, to look whom to smite. For as it were with eyes closed He does not wish to look at him, whom He does not wish to smite. Hence it is immediately added also about the li.

[k] al. "unless the purpose of the soul be fervent."

Job 14, 4. judgment itself, *To bring him into judgment with Thee?* But whereas he had viewed God coming to judgment, he again takes a view of his own frailty. He sees that he cannot be clean of himself, who, that he might be able to be, came forth out of uncleanness. And he adds,

Moral. lii.

Ver. 4. *Who can make clean a thing conceived of unclean seed? Is it not Thou, Who only Art?*

lii. 70. He That alone is clean in Himself can cleanse the unclean thing. For man, who lives in a corruptible flesh, has the uncleannesses of temptation engrained in him, seeing that he derived them from his birth. For his very conception, for the sake of fleshly gratification, is uncleanness. Hence the Psalmist saith, *Behold, I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me.* Hence it is therefore that he is very often tempted even against his will. Hence it is that he is subject to impurities in imagination, even though he strive against them by reason, because being conceived in uncleanness, whilst he follows after cleanness, he is striving to get the better of that which he is. But whoever has mastered the motions of secret temptation, and overcome uncleanness of thought, must never ascribe his cleanness to himself, in that none can make clean a thing conceived of unclean seed, save He Who alone is clean in Himself. Let him, then, that has already reached in mind the place of cleanness, cast his eye upon the way of his conception, which he came by, and thence satisfy himself, that in his own power he has no cleanness of life, the beginning of whose existence was made in uncleanness. But the meaning here may be that blessed Job, regarding the Incarnation of the Redeemer, saw that That Man only in the world was not conceived of unclean seed, Who so came into the world from the Virgin's womb, that He had nothing derived from unclean conception. For He did not proceed from the man and the woman, but from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. He only then proved truly clean in His Flesh, Who was incapable of being affected by the gratification of the flesh, seeing that it was not by the gratification of the flesh that He came hither.

Ps. 51, 7.

BOOK XII.

Wherein after the fourteenth chapter of the Book of Job has been explained, beginning at the fifth verse, the fifteenth chapter entire is explained for the most part in a moral sense.

IT is the practice of the righteous, to think of the present life, how transitory it is, so much the more heedfully in proportion as they are taught more earnestly to take thought of the eternal blessings of the heavenly Country; for by those things, which they see lasting within, they more exactly mark the flight of things passing away without. Whence blessed Job, when he had delivered a sentence on the transition of man's time, saying, *Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live;* and again, *He fleeth also as a shadow, and never continueth in the same state;* further adds of the shortness of his life; LIT.

Ver. 5. *The days of man are short, the number of his months is with Thee.*

1. For he sees that that as it were is not with us, which runs by with such great rapidity, but seeing that even things passing away stand with Almighty God, he declares that 'the number of our months is with Him.' Or, indeed, by the 'days,' the shortness of time is denoted, but by the 'months' the spaces of the days are multiplied. Thus to ourselves 'the days are short;' but seeing that our life is further extended afterwards, 'the number of our months' is recorded, to be with God.' Hence also it is said by Solomon, *Length of days is in her right hand.* It goes on; Prov. 3, 16.

Thou hast appointed his bounds, that he cannot pass.

2. Of the things that happen to men in this world, none come to pass without the secret counsel of Almighty God; for God, foreseeing all things that should follow, before the ages of the world decreed how they should be ordered in the ii.

Job 14, 5. Lit. ages of the world. Since it is already appointed to man both to what extent the prosperity of the world shall attend him, or in what degree adversity shall fall upon him, that His Elect neither unbounded prosperity may exalt, nor overmuch adversity sink them too low; moreover it is appointed in this very life of mortality how long he shall live with the conditions of time. For although Almighty God added fifteen years to the life of King Hezekiah, yet at that moment that he suffered him to die, He foresaw he would die. Wherein a question presents itself, viz. how it is that it should be said to him by the Prophet, *Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live?* For he, to whom sentence of death was declared, immediately upon his tears had life added to him. Now the Lord said by the Prophet at what time he in himself deserved to die, but by the bountifulness of mercy, He kept him for the undergoing death at that time, which He Himself foreknew before the ages began. Nor even therefore was the Prophet deceptive, because he made known the time of death, at which that man deserved to die, nor were the appointments of the Lord rent and torn, forasmuch as this also, that the years of life should be added to by the bountifulness of God, was foreordained before the ages began; and the period of life, which was added contrary to expectation without, was inwardly appointed without increase upon foreknowledge; and so it is well said, *Thou hast appointed his bounds which he cannot pass.*

2 Kings 20, 1.

Moral. 3. Which may also be taken according to the spirit, in that we sometimes endeavour to advance in virtuous attainments, and some gifts we are vouchsafed, but being kept off from some, we lie prone in things below. For there is no man who masters that degree of goodness which he desires, in that Almighty God, Who discerneth the inward parts, sets bounds to the very spiritual attainments themselves; that by reason of that which man tries to master, and is unable, he may not exalt himself in those things, in which he has the power. Whence too that great Preacher, that had been carried up into the third heaven, and penetrated the secrets of Paradise, after that revelation, was not left the power to be at rest, and without temptation; but whereas Almighty God has 'appointed man his bounds, which he cannot pass,' he

both exalted him to know things on high, and set him down again to be subject to weak things, that he looking at the measure of his compass, whilst he endeavoured to lay hold on security, and could not, that he might not be carried out of himself in pride, might be forced in humility ever to return back within his own bounds. It proceeds; Book XII.

Ver. 6. *Turn from him a little while, that he may rest, till his longed for day come, as an hireling's.*

iii. 4. In this place, *Turn from him*, means, 'remove from him the force of the stroke,' for who can rest when He turns away from him, when He Himself alone is rest, and the further off a man is from Him, he is also rendered void of rest in proportion? Thus it is in such sort said, *Turn from him*, that you should understand, 'from smiting;' for it is fitly added, *till his longed for day come, as an hireling's.* In proportion as an hireling is far from the end of his work, so is he far from the recompense of his wages. Thus every holy man being set in this life, whilst he sees that he is far from departing out of the present life, laments that he is far from the eternal bliss. What then is it to say, *Turn from him a little while, that he may rest;* but, 'withdraw now the strokes of the present life, and shew the blessings of eternal rest?' Whence too it is added concerning that rest itself; *till his longed for day come, as an hireling's;* for then the longed for day as of an hireling comes to man, when he receives eternal rest in compensation for his labour. But as far as relates to the aspect of the present life, how despicable is the race of man, so full of miseries, blessed Job yet further tells, and describes how greatly the very things without sense seem to surpass him, when he says;

Ver. 7—10. *For there is a hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will be green again; and that the tender branches thereof will sprout forth. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth foliage as when it was planted. But man, when he is dead, and stripped, and consumed, where is he?*

iv. 5. Now because this is self-evident according to the letter, we must refer the sense to the things of the interior, and search how they are to be made out after the spiritual Myst.

Job 14, 8. 9. Myst. signification. Thus in Holy Scripture by the name of 'tree' we have represented sometimes the Cross, sometimes the righteous man, or even the unrighteous man, and sometimes the Wisdom of God Incarnate. Thus the Cross is denoted

Jer. 11, 19. V. by 'the tree,' when it is said, *Let us put the tree into his bread;* for to 'put the tree into the bread' is to apply the Cross to the Body of our Lord. Again by the title of 'the tree' we have the just man, or even the unjust man, set forth,

Ez. 17, 24. as the Lord saith by the Prophet, *I the Lord have brought down the high tree, and exalted the low tree.* Forasmuch

Luke 14, 11. as according to the word of the self-same Truth, *Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted:*

Ecc. 11, 3. Solomon also saith, *If the tree fall towards the South, or toward the North, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.* For in the day of their death the just man does 'fall to the South,' and the unjust 'to the North,' in that both the just man in favour of the Spirit is brought to joy, and the sinner, together with the apostate

Isa. 14, 13. Angel, who said, *I will sit also upon the mount of the testimony, in the sides of the North,* is cast away in his frozen heart. Again, the Wisdom of God Incarnate is represented by

Prov. 3, 18. 'the Tree,' as where it is written thereon, *She is a tree of life to them that lay hold on Her.* And as She Herself

Luke 23, 31. says, *If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* And so in this place whereas a tree is preferred before man, what is man taken for but every carnal person? and what is denoted by the title of 'the tree,' but the life of the righteous? *For there is a hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will be green again.* For when in a death of painful endurance the just man is hard bestead[a] for the truth, in the greenness of everlasting life he is recovered again; and he who here proved green by faith, there

[1] speciem becomes green in actual sight[1]. 'And his branches shoot,' in that it is most often the case that by the sufferings of the just man, all faithful persons are redoubled in the love of the heavenly country, and they receive the greenness of the spiritual life, while they are glad that he did courageously here in God's behalf. It goes on;

Ver. 8, 9. *Though the root thereof wax old in the earth,*

[a] Some omit 'in,' making it simply 'is put to a death of suffering for the truth.'

and the stock thereof die in the dust; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth leaves as when it was first planted.

6. What is 'the root' of the righteous, but holy preaching, since it is that he springs out of, and that he holds on in? and what is meant by the name of 'the earth' or of 'dust,' but the sinner? to whom it is said by the voice of the Creator, [m] *Earth thou art, and unto earth shalt thou return.* Or, indeed, as our Translation reads, [1] *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* Thus 'the root of the righteous waxes old in the earth, and his stock dies in the dust,' in that in the hearts of the wicked his preaching is despised, and thought dried of all goodness, and 'his stock dies in the dust,' in that amidst the hands of the persecutors his body is bereft of life; for according to the words of Wisdom, *In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, and their departure is taken for misery.* But this one, whose 'root waxed old in the earth, and whose trunk died in the dust,' *through the smell of water, buddeth*; in that through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by the example of his conduct he causes the budding of virtue in the hearts of the Elect. For by the designation of water sometimes the watering of the Holy Spirit is used to be understood, as where it is written, *If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst.* It follows; *And bring forth foliage as when it was first planted.* To 'bring forth foliage on the stock being cut down' is, when the just man is put an end to in the body, by the mere example of his suffering to raise up the hearts of many, and out of a right faith to shew forth the greenness of truth. And it is well said, *As when it was first planted.* All that is done by the righteous here is a second planting; in that clearly the first planting does not consist in the practice of the good, but in the foreknowledge of the Creator; and whereas all that the Elect do, as it is first seen and settled interiorly, so afterwards is executed outwardly, it is well said, *And bring forth foliage as when it was first planted,* i. e. it shews its greenness in the exe-

v.

Gen. 3, 19.

[1] so Vulg.

Wisd. 3, 2.

John 7, 37. John 4, 14.

[m] Old Italic Version, Vid. Sabatier.

Job 14, 9. Lit. cuting of practice, such as it had before in the foreknowledge of the Creator.

7. The 'root of the righteous' may also be taken for the very nature itself of a human being, by virtue whereof he subsists, which same root waxes old in the earth, when the natural frame of flesh comes to nought being reduced to dust, whose 'stock dies in the dust,' in that the body dismantled of its own form and fashion crumbles to nought; but at the 'scent of water it buds,' in that through the coming of the Holy Spirit it rises again; *and it will bring forth boughs as when it was first planted,* in that it returns to that form, which it was created to receive, if, when he was set in Paradise, he had refused to sin.

Proph. 8. Which perhaps may also be taken of the Lord Himself, Who is the Head of all the good; for according to that which we have said before, whereas He saith of Himself, Luke 23, 31. *For if they have done these things in a green tree, what shall be done in a dry?* He said that Himself was the green tree, and we the dry tree, forasmuch as He contained in His own Person the power of the Divine Nature, but we that are mere men are called a dry tree. And so 'there is hope of a tree if it be cut down, that it will sprout again,' in that even if He was able to be put to death by His Passion, yet by the glory of His Resurrection, He came to the greenness of life again; 'His branches shoot,' in that the faithful being multiplied by His Resurrection grew out far and wide; His root as it were waxed old in the earth, in that the preaching of Him was to the unbelief of the Jews a despicable thing; 'and His stock dried in the dust,' in that in the heart of those that persecuted Him, which was uplifted by the wind of their unbelief, He was held as an object of scorn and contempt, in that He was capable of being put to death in the flesh; but 'at the scent of water He budded,' in that through the power of God His Flesh after demise returned to life, according to that which is written, Acts 3, 15. *Whom God hath raised from the dead.* For in that God is a Trinity, the Holy Trinity, i. e. the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, raised up to life the extinct Flesh of the Only-Begotten Son. And 'It brought forth foliage as when It was first planted,' in that the feebleness of the Apostles, which in the season of His death

was afraid and denied, and by denying turned dry, by the glory of His Resurrection was again quickened in faith. In comparison with which Tree what is every man but dust? Hence it is added;

Ver. 10. *But when man is dead, and stripped, and consumed, where, I pray, is he?*

vi. 9. There is no man without sin, save Him Who came not into this world by sin; and whereas all we are tied fast in the bonds of guilt, we die by the mere loss of righteousness. Of the robe of innocence given us aforetime in Paradise, we are stripped naked, and we are yet further consumed by the subsequent dissolution of the flesh. Thus man being a sinner dies in guilt, is stripped bare of righteousness, is consumed in punishment. This nakedness of his erring son the Father vouchsafed to cover, who said, on his returning to him, *Bring forth quickly the first robe.* For 'the first robe' is the robe of innocence, which man being created aright received, but being persuaded wrongly by the serpent forfeited. Against this same nakedness it is said, *Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked.* For we 'keep our garments,' when we keep the precepts of innocency in our hearts, that whereas guilt strips us naked to the Judge, penance should cover us returning to the innocence we had forfeited. And it is well said, *Where, I pray, is he?* in that the sinner, man, refused to stand there where he was created; while here, where he fell, he is forbidden to stay for long. Willingly he forfeited his country, unwillingly he is driven forth from his exile, which he delights in. Where then is he, who is not in His love, where only it is truly to be? It proceeds;

Luke 15, 22.

Rev. 16, 15.

Ver. 11, 12. *As if the waters fail from the sea, and the river being emptied drieth up: so man lieth down, and riseth not.*

vii. 10. The mind of man is the sea, and the thoughts of his mind, as it were, a wave of the sea; which sometimes swell in anger, are made calm by grace, and from hatred run out in bitterness; but when man dieth, 'the waters of the sea fail,' in that according to the words of the Psalmist, *In that very day his thoughts perish.* And again it is written concerning the dying soul, *Also their love, and their hatred, and their*

Ps. 146, 4.

Eccl. 9, 6.

Job 14, 11. 12. Lit. *envy shall perish together.* Thus 'the river being emptied drieth up,' in that, when the soul is withdrawn, the body remains empty. For the lifeless body is as it were the empty channel of a river, wherein it is to be marked with an attentive eye that the present life, i. e. the time while the soul stays in the body, is likened to the sea and to a river, for the water of the sea is bitter, of a river sweet. And because we that are living here are at one time under the influence of certain bitternesses, and at another time are seen to be serene and gentle with sweetness, the course of the present life is set forth by the similitude of the sea and a river.

11. But herein that seems to be exceedingly hard which is added, *So man lieth down, and riseth not.* Wherefore do we so toil and labour, if we are not straining after the recompense of the Resurrection? And how is it said, *and riseth not,* when it is written, *We shall all rise again, but we shall not all be changed?* And again, *If in this life only we have hope of life in Christ, we are of all men most miserable:* and when 'Truth' says by Itself, *All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.* But the sentence subjoined points out what distinction there is concealed in the sentence preceding. For it is added;

1 Cor. 15, 51. Vulg. v. 19. John 5, 28. 29.

Till the heavens be no more they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

viii. 12. For it is plain that they shall not rise again, that is, till the heavens be no more, in that except the end of the world come, the race of mankind shall not wake to life from the sleep of death. Not, then, that he shall not rise again at all, but that before the crumbling of the heavens the human race shall not rise again, is what he teaches. Moreover it is a thing to be marked, why after he had called man dead above, below he designates him not dead, but sleeping, and tells that he shall never rise again from his sleep until the heaven be crumbled in pieces, which is no otherwise than that it is plainly given us to understand, that by the likeness of the tree quickened afresh to life, he designates man a dead sinner, i. e. extinct from the life of righteousness; but when he speaks of the death of the flesh, he preferred to call

this not death but sleep, teaching us surely the hope of the Resurrection; in that as a man quickly awakes out of sleep, so shall he rise in a moment at the nod of his Creator from the death of the body. For the name of death is horribly feared by weak minds, but the title of sleep is not feared. Hence Paul in charging his disciples saith, ***But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not as men without hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring again with Him.*** How is it that the great Preacher calls the death of the Lord death, but the death of the servants of the Lord he names not death, but sleep; but that, having regard to the weak hearts of his hearers, he mixes the medicine of his preaching with wonderful art, and Him, Whom they knew to have risen already, he does not doubt to teach them was dead, while those, who had not as yet risen again, that he might teach the hope of the Resurrection, he calls not dead, but sleeping? For he did not fear to call Him dead Whom his hearers knew to have already risen, and he was afraid to call those dead, whose rising again they scarcely believed. Thus blessed Job, seeing that he does not doubt of those that are dead in the flesh waking again to life, calls them sleeping rather than dead. It goes on;

Book XII.

1 Thess. 4, 13. 14.

Ver. 13. *O that Thou wouldest defend me in hell!*

ix. 13. That before the coming of the Mediator between God and man, every person, though he might have been of a pure and approved life, descended to the prisons of hell, there can be no doubt; in that man, who fell by his own act, was unable by his own act to return to the rest of Paradise, except that He should come, Who by the mystery of His Incarnation should open the way into that same Paradise. For hence after the sin of the first man it is recorded, that a flaming sword was placed at the entrance of Paradise, which is also called 'moveable[1],' in that the time should come one day, that it might even be removed. Nor yet do we maintain that the souls of the righteous did so go down into hell, that they were imprisoned in places of punishment; but it is to be believed that there are higher regions in hell, and that there are lower regions apart, so that both the

Gen. 3, 24. [1] versatilis, V.

Job 14, 13. Lit. righteous might be at rest in the upper regions, and the unrighteous be tormented in the lower ones. Hence the Psalmist, by reason of the grace of God preventing him, says, Ps. 86, 13. *Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.* Thus blessed Job before the coming of the Mediator, knowing of his going down into hell, implores the protecting hand of his Maker there, in order that he might be a stranger to the places of punishment; where, while he is brought to enjoy rest, he might be kept hidden from punishment. Hence he subjoins;

[1] 'pertransiit' Vulg. *That thou wouldest keep me secret, until Thy wrath quite*[1] *pass by.*

x. 14. For the wrath of Almighty God does herein execute the force of its severity every day, that those who live unworthily it swallows up in most worthy punishments. Which wrath now indeed 'passes by,' but at the end it 'quite passes by,' in that now it is executed, but at the end of the world it is finally consummated. Yet this wrath as to the souls of the righteous 'quite passed by' on the coming of our Redeemer, in that those the Mediator between God and man brought back from the prisons of hell to the joys of Paradise, when He did Himself go down there in pity. And on this subject it is necessary to be known, that the term 'wrath' does not suit the Divine Being, in that no disquieting influence disorders the simple nature of God. Wisd. 12, 18. Whence it is said to Him, *But Thou, Ruler of power, judgest with tranquillity, and orderest us with exceeding great regard.* But because the souls of the righteous were one day to be set free by the coming of the Mediator from the regions of hell, though not the places of punishment, this too the righteous man foresees, and beseeching adds;

And appoint me a set time, when Thou shouldest remember me.

xi. 15. *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent* Gal. 4, 4. 5. *forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law.* Thus the man of the Lord foreseeing this redemption, wherein many of the Gentile world as well were destined to be set free, as he Job 10, 13. himself says; *Though these things Thou dost hide in Thine heart, yet I know that Thou dost remember all things;*

prays for a time for the remembering of him, to be appointed him with Almighty God. For it is hence that the Lord saith in the Gospel, *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things unto Me*, i. e. 'all things Elect;' for neither did the Lord, when He returned from hell, draw the Elect and the lost together, but He bore off all those things from thence, which He did foreknow would have attached themselves to Him. Hence He also says by the Prophet Hosea, *I will be thy death, O death; I will be the biting of thee, O hell.* Now what we put to death, we do our best that it should not be at all, and of that which we bite, a part we take away, and a part we leave. Therefore whereas the Lord wholly destroyed death in His Elect members, He proved Himself the 'Death of death;' but whereas He took a part from hell, and left a part, He did not wholly destroy but did 'bite hell.' Therefore He says, *I will be thy Death, O death;* i. e. 'in Mine Elect, I utterly destroy thee.—*I will be the biting of thee, O hell;* in that in taking those away, I pierce thee in part.' And so let blessed Job, knowing of this coming of our Redeemer to hell, pray for what he foresaw in the future, and let him say, *And that Thou shouldest appoint me a set time wherein Thou wouldest remember me.* It goes on;

John 12, 32.

Hos. 13, 14.

Ver. 14. *Thinkest thou that a dead man shall live again?* Vulg.

16. It is common with righteous men, in that which they themselves feel to be sure and well-grounded, to urge something as if in doubting, so as to put the words of the weak into their own lips; and again by a strong sentence they gainsay utterly him that halts in doubtfulness, that by that which they are seen to put forth doubtfully, they may in some degree condescend to the weak, and hereby, that they deliver a sure sentence, they may draw the doubtful minds of the weak to firm ground. Which whilst they do, they are following the pattern of our Head. For our Lord, when He was near to His passion, took up the voice of those that were weak in Himself, saying, *O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me;* and that He might remove their fear, He took it in Himself. And again shewing by obedience the force of strength, He saith, *Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.* That so when that thing threatens

xii.

Matt. 26, 39.

Job 14, 14. 15. Lit. us which we would not have take place, we should so in weakness pray that it may not, as that in strength we may be ready for the will of our Creator to be done, even in opposition to our own will. After this pattern, then, the words of weakness are sometimes proper to be adopted by the strong, that by their strong preachings afterwards the hearts of the weak may be more acceptably strengthened. Hence blessed Job when he uttered words as of one in doubt, saying, *Thinkest thou that a dead man shall live again?* presently added the sentence of his sure belief, whereby he saith,

All the days that I now serve militant will I wait, till my change come.

xiii. 17. He that waits for his change with such ardent longing, shews how great his certainty was of the Resurrection, and he makes it appear how greatly he looks down upon the course of the present life, who designates it a 'service militant.' For in the militant state there is the going on continually to an end, day by day the finishing of the conclusion is expected. Thus he despises the course of this life, and looks for the settling of fixedness, who hereby, that he is serving subject to changeableness, is in haste to attain to his change. For to the just man in this life the very load of his corruption is burthensome. Because watchings exhaust with weariness, sleep is sought, that the labour and harassing effect of watchings may be moderated: but sometimes even sleep kills. Hunger wastes the body, and that its craving may be banished, victuals are sought after: but frequently even the very victuals oppress, which had been sought in order to banish the oppression of debility. And so the load of corruption is a heavy burthen, which except it were so heavy, Paul would never have said, *For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him Who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.* So let the holy man, longing for the state of incorruption, say, *All the days that I now serve militant will I wait till my change come.* In which same change what it is that takes place, he adds;

Rom. 8, 20—22.

Ver. 15. *Thou shalt call me, and I will answer Thee.*

18. We are said to answer any one, when we do works in turn answerable to his deeds. Thus in that change the Lord 'calls,' and man 'answers,' in that, before the brightness of The Incorrupt, man is shewn forth incorrupt after corruption. For now so long as we are subject to corruption, we do not in any wise 'answer' our Creator, seeing that whereas corruption is far from incorruption, there is no similarity suitable to our answering. But of that change it is written, *When He shall appear, we shall be like Him: for we shall see Him as He is.* Then therefore we shall truly 'answer God,' Who 'calleth,' when at the bidding of the Supreme Incorruption we shall arise incorruptible; and because the creature is not able to earn this by itself, but it is brought to pass by the gift of Almighty God alone, that it should be changed to that exceeding glory of incorruption, it is rightly subjoined; *Thou wilt stretch forth Thy right hand to the work of Thine hands.* Book XII. xiv. 1 John 3, 2.

19. As if he said in plain words; 'For this reason Thy corruptible creature is able to hold fast unto incorruption, because he is lifted up by the hands of Thy power, and is kept by the grace of Thy regard, that he should hold fast.' For the human creature by this alone, that it is a creature, has it inherent in itself to sink down below itself, but man has obtained it from his Creator, that he should both be caught above himself by contemplation, and held fast in himself by incorruption. And so that the creature may not fall away beneath himself, but hold on in incorruption, he is lifted to the stedfastness of immutability by the right hand of His Maker. Moreover it may be that by the title of 'the Right Hand' the Son may be designated; in that, *All things were made by Him.* Thus Almighty God 'stretched out His Right Hand to the work of His hands,' because, that He might lift on high the human race, become refuse and grovelling in the lowest things, He sent the Only-Begotten One, made Incarnate for this end. By Whose Incarnation it has been vouchsafed to us that we, who fall into incorruption of our own will, should one time be enabled to answer God when He calls us in the glory of incorruption. Wherein who can estimate the bountifulness of Divine Mercy, that He should bring man after sin to such a height of glory? xv. John 1, 3.

Job 14, 16. 17. Lit. God takes account of the bad things we do, yet by the grace of His lovingkindness He remits them to us in mercy. And hence it is added;

Ver. 16. *For now Thou numberest my steps, but Thou sparest my sins.*

xvi. 20. God 'numbers our steps,' when He marks each one of our several deeds for the recompensing them. For what is denoted by the steps, but each particular act of ours? Thus Almighty God both 'numbers our steps' and 'spares our sins,' in that He at once surveys our actions with exactness, and yet remits them in mercy to those that repent, Who both sees obduracy in those that sin, and yet softens it into penitence by preventing grace. Thus He 'numbers sins,' in that He turns us ourselves to bewail the several things which we have done. And He remits them in mercy, in that whilst we our own selves punish them, He Himself never judges them in the last reckoning, as Paul testifies, who saith, *For if we should judge ourselves, we should not be judged.* Hence it is further added;

1 Cor. 11, 31.

Ver. 17. *Thou hast sealed up as it were in a bag my transgressions; but Thou hast healed mine iniquity.*

xvii. 21. Our 'transgressions are sealed up as it were in a bag,' in that that thing which we ourselves do in outward act, except we wash away by penance in the mean while, is kept in the secresy of God's judgments under a kind of hiding, that one day it may also come forth out of the bag of secresy into the publicity of the Judgment. Hence it is said by Moses too; *Is not this laid up in store with Me, and sealed up among My treasures? In the day of vengeance I will repay them.* But when for the evil things that we have done, we are bruised with the stroke of discipline, and lament the same by penance, He 'sealeth up,' and 'healeth' our iniquity, in that He neither leaves things unpunished here, nor reserves them to be punished in the Judgment. Thus He 'seals transgressions,' in that He marks them with exactness here, to chastise them with the rod, but He 'heals' them, in that He wholly remits them in the stroke. Hence the iniquity of that persecutor of Him, whom He laid prostrate on the ground, He did also by sealing heal, seeing that He said concerning him to Ananias; *He is a chosen*

Deut. 32, 34.

Acts 9, 15.

vessel unto Me to bear My Name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My Name's sake. For to that man, whom on account of past transgressions He still threatens with future sufferings, what he had done wrong, surely He kept sealed in the heart; but as surely in so sealing He had healed his transgressions, in that He called him 'a chosen vessel[1].' Or, surely, 'our transgressions are sealed in a bag,' when the evil things we have been guilty of, we reflect on continually with a heedful heart. For what is the heart of man, but God's 'bag?' wherein whilst we earnestly look to see how much we transgress, we carry our sins as it were 'sealed up in God's bag.' Did not David keep his sin 'sealed up in a bag,' when he said, *For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.* And because the faults, which we are made acquainted with in reviewing and repeating, the pitiful Creator remits to us, after the 'transgressions being sealed in a bag,' it is rightly subjoined, *But Thou hast healed mine iniquity:* as if he said in plain speech, 'What things Thou dost now seal, so that I in repenting should see, doubtless Thou doest it, that in the retribution they should never be seen.' It follows;

Book XII.

[1] *vas electionis*

Ps. 51, 3.

Ver. 18, 19. *And surely the mountain falling slippeth away, and the rock is removed out of his place. The waters wear the stones, and by washing little by little the earth is consumed, and so Thou wilt in a like way destroy man.*

22. This is very often the case, that upon rocks falling, a piece of rock is removed to other places; that waters wear stones, and little by little the ground is wasted by the washings of the flood: but we have need to make out with great diligence that which is brought in; *and man Thou wilt in a like way destroy.* For what is that, that to a mountain falling, a rock removed, a stone worn hollow, and ground consumed by the washing of the flood, the ruin of man is likened, but this, which we are plainly given to understand, that there are two sorts of temptations, one sort, which passes in the mind even of the good man by sudden accident, that he should be so tempted of a sudden, that by the unexpectedness of the event it should make him reel, and bring him to the ground, and that he does not see his

xviii.

Job 14, 18. 19. Moral.

falling, until after he has fallen; while there is another which comes by little and little into the mind, and by gentle suggestions corrupts the resisting soul, and not by its excessiveness but by its importunity wastes all the powers of righteousness therein? And so, whereas there is one sort of temptation, which by a sudden assault very often brings the good down to the ground, let it be said, ***And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place,*** i. e. the holy mind, whose place was righteousness, is by a sudden impulse removed into sin. Again, because there is another sort of temptation, which infuses itself gently into the heart of man, and wears and wastes all the hardness of its resolution, let it be said, ***The waters wear the stones;*** in this way, viz. that the unremitted and soft flatteries of lust suck away the hardness of the soul, and the slow and penetrating evil habit corrodes the hard and forcible purpose of the mind. Hence it is added, ***And by washing the ground is consumed little by little.*** For as when water flows in, 'the ground is consumed little by little,' so when bad habit creeps on [n] by gentle degrees, even the strong mind is engulphed. Hence it is well added, ***And Thou wilt in a like way destroy man,*** i. e. in this way, that when Thou by a righteous appointment sufferest temptation of a sudden to get the dominion over the mind of him, who is seen to have his stand on high, Thou causest 'the mountain to fall and slip away,' and when the will is changed to evil, it is as if 'the rock were removed to a new place,' but whilst Thou lettest a gentle and fine yet unremitting temptation prevail over the minds of those, who are accounted strong, 'the waters in a manner wear the stones, and by washing, the ground is consumed little by little,' in that the hardness of the mind being subdued by gentle suggesting is made soft.

23. Let us see how that David was a 'high mountain,' who was enabled to contemplate such great mysteries of God by the Spirit of prophecy; but let us mark how he 'slipped down,' by a sudden fall, who whilst walking on the solar, lusted after and carried off another man's wife, and killed her husband with loss to his own army. Then 'fell a mountain with a sudden fall,' when that mind which was used to

[n] al. 'surripienti,' 'encroaches.'

dwell with heavenly mysteries, was overcome by sudden temptation, and brought under to such most monstrous pollution. And so 'the rock was removed from its place,' when the mind of the prophet being shut out from the mysteries of prophecy came to imagine filthy things. Let us see moreover how 'the waters wear the stones, and by washing the ground is consumed little by little,' in that Solomon by an immoderate intercourse and frequency with women was brought to this pass, that he built a temple to idols: and he who had before erected a temple to God, by frequency of lust, being even bowed down under misbelief, was not afraid to erect idol-temples. And so it came to pass, that by unremitting wantonness of the flesh, he was brought even to misbelief of the spirit. What else then, but that the 'waters did wear away the stone, and by washing the ground was consumed little by little,' in that by the encroaching[1] of sin as it flowed in little by little, the ground of his heart crumbled away unto wasting? Thus let blessed Job consider both sorts of temptation, whether the sudden and excessive, or the gentle and prolonged sort, let him contemplate the falls of his fellow-creatures, and from those things which take place outwardly let him catch the key-note of his contemplation within, saying, *And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place: the waters wear the stones, and by washing little by little the earth is wasted; and Thou wilt in like manner destroy men;* i. e. 'as these things without sense at one time are brought to the ground suddenly, at one time are worn little by little by the softness of water being let in; so likewise him, whom Thou hast created a reasoning creature, Thou dost either overthrow by sudden temptation, or permittest to be worn and wasted by a long and gentle one;' and that reasoning creature he directly describes in the following words, saying,

Book XII.

[1] surripiente

Ver. 20. *Thou hast strengthened him for a little space, that he might pass by for ever.*

24. Man has been 'strengthened here for a little space,' in that he has received here powers of living for a while, that he should for ever pass away thither, where no end should bound and shut in his life, but in this moment's space where

xix. Lit.

Job 14, 21. Lit. he has been 'strengthened,' he extracts that wherefrom in the everlasting world he may either find how always to have joy, or not ever escape the punishments he has entered upon. And for this reason, that 'he has been strengthened for a little space,' to 'pass away for everlasting,' it is fitly added immediately;

Thou wilt change his countenance, and send him away.

xx. 25. 'The face of man is changed,' when his form is wasted by death; but 'he is sent away,' in that from those things which he kept willingly he is necessitated to pass away to the eternal world against his will, and while he is brought thereunto, these things which he held long and thought on, how it will be with them now left behind him he knows nothing. Hence it is added;

Ver. 21. *Whether his sons be in honour or dishonour, he perceiveth not.*

xxi. 26. For as they, who are still living, know nothing of the souls of the dead, in what place they are held; so the dead, concerning the life of those living after them in the flesh, know not at all how it is ordered; in that both the life of the spirit is far from the life of the flesh, and as the corporeal and incorporeal are things different in kind, so are they parted in knowledge. Which however is not to be imagined concerning holy souls, in that they which behold the brightness of Almighty God within, we cannot for a moment suppose that there is any thing without that they know not[b]. But because carnal persons bestow their chief affection on their children, blessed Job declares that they are hereafter ignorant of that, which they loved here with all their heart, so that 'whether their sons be in honour or dishonour they know not,' whereas their care for these was always preying upon their minds. Which however if it is to be understood in a spiritual sense, with no unfitness by the title of sons we have works denoted, as Paul saith of woman, *Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in childbearing.* Not that a woman, who being devoted to continency never bears children,

Moral.

1 Tim. 2, 15.

[b] S. T. Aquinas, Sum. Theol. P. 1. Q. 82. Art. 8. prefers this opinion to that doubtfully given by St. Augustine, De cura gerenda pro Mortuis, c. xiii. and c. xvi. St. Aug. however argues rather against supposing such knowledge natural, than against the probability of its existing as a divine gift.

shall not be saved, but she is said to be 'saved by child-bearing,' because by the operation of good works she is united to everlasting salvation. Thus the children in honour are good deeds, and the children in dishonour are bad deeds. And often man strives to do things with a good intention, yet by reason of the many occasions that creep upon him, how his actions are accounted of in the sight of Almighty God is a thing uncertain. And so 'whether his sons be in honour or dishonour he perceiveth not,' in that his works being sifted with a searching scrutiny, whether they be approved or condemned he cannot tell. Thus here man is placed in the painfulness of labour, and thither he is brought in the fearfulness of misgiving. Hence it is yet further subjoined concerning the labour of the present life itself, BOOK XII.

Ver. 22. *But his flesh while he liveth shall have pain, and his soul shall mourn over himself.*

27. Concerning the married Paul saith, *Nevertheless, such shall have trouble in the flesh.* But they may 'have trouble in the flesh here,' who are even now leading spiritual lives. Wherefore then is it said as it were in a special sense, that there is 'trouble of the flesh' to married persons, seeing that it is not far removed even from the life of the spiritual; excepting that those commonly meet with worse troubles from the flesh, who delight themselves with the pleasures of the flesh? And it is well said, *And his soul within him shall mourn over himself;* in that whosoever desires to rejoice in himself, by this alone is henceforth in woe, viz. that he has gone far from the true joy. For the true joy of the soul is the Creator. Therefore it is meet that man should ever find in himself sorrow, who, forsaking His Creator, sought joy in himself. It proceeds; xxii. 1 Cor. 7, 28.

Chap. xv. 1. *Then answered Eliphaz the Temanite, and said, Should a wise man answer as if speaking into the wind, and fill his belly with burning?*

28. We have already said frequently that blessed Job bears a type of the Holy Church universal, and that his friends bear the likeness of heretics, who as it were on the plea of defence of the Lord find occasion of foolish talking, and let loose insulting words against good men; to whom all is displeasing that is thought by the faithful, as though it were xxiii. ALLEG.

Job 15, 1. Allegor.

uttered to the wind. Whence it is said now, *Should a wise man answer as if speaking into the wind?* Nor do they account the words of the good as the sayings of reason, but as the stingings of madness. Whence it is added, *And shall he fill his belly with burning?* in that those things even which they know themselves to say by way of insult, they are ever bent to palliate, as has been said, on the ground of defending the Lord. Whence Eliphaz adds;

Thou reprovest with words him that is not equal to thee, and thou speakest what is not expedient for thee.

xxiv. 29. Now they suppose that no one has the fear of the Lord, saving him whom they can draw into the foolishness of their own confession. Hence he adds, *Yea, thou castest off fear, and hast taken prayer before God.* 'Taken' means 'taken away;' as if he said in plain terms, 'Presuming on Thine own righteousness, thou scornest to implore the grace of Thy Creator.' For when heretics do not find real evils to urge against the good, they feign things to reproach them with, that they may seem righteous, and it very often happens, that they come to open words of insult. Whence it is still further added,

For thine iniquity teacheth thy mouth, and thou followest the tongue of the crafty.

30. 'Iniquity teaches the mouth,' when there is conceived by a bad life somewhat to be spoken of a worse kind. Now because blessed Job was free in speech in proportion as he was holy in action, by his friends, who hold the type of heretics, he is found fault with at once on the grounds of a wicked life and of a bold mouth, so that it should be said, *Thine iniquity teacheth thy mouth.* As if it were said to him in plain words, 'What thou speakest wickedly, thou hast learnt of a more wicked life.' But it often happens that heretics, whilst in seeming they venerate God, oppose His mysteries, and they think it humility if they deny the truth. For there are some, who imagine that they are bringing injury upon God, if they confess that He took true flesh, or if they should think that He was capable of really dying for us in the flesh. And whilst they endeavour as it were to bestow upon God a greater degree of honour, they are enforced to deny the real praises of His goodness. For in praise of His charity what is there more

efficacious, than that in our behalf He should make those things meet to Himself for the undertaking them, which seem for Him unworthy. But Holy Church confesses His very and true Flesh, His very and true Death, but in declaring these things she is thought by Heretics to put an indignity upon God. Whence it is said now, *And thou followest the tongue of them that blaspheme.* And if any piece of adversity befall her in this world, they say that it was brought upon her by this very injuriousness of her confession. Hence it is yet further added; Book XII.

Ver. 6. *Thine own mouth shall condemn thee, and not I; yea, thine own lips shall answer thee.*

31. For because they suppose that the evils of adversity break out in consequence of the erroneousness of confession; they say that 'her own lips shall answer her,' so that fault of utterance should be the cause of the scourge. But sometimes they desire to repress it as if by reasoning; whence Eliphaz sets himself to reprove blessed Job as it were on principles of reason, saying, xxvi.

Ver. 7, 8. *Art thou the first man that was born? or wast thou made before the hills? Hast thou heard the secret of God? and shall His wisdom be inferior to thee?*

32. As if He said in plainer words, 'Thou, who speakest of the Eternal One, consider that thou art a creature of time. Thou that arguest concerning His wisdom, remember that thou knowest not His counsel.' But that Heretics for this take up the words of the defence of the Lord, that they may appear to be learned, and whilst they seem to defend the glory of God, are making known their knowledge to men, the very words of Eliphaz subjoined bear witness, who began indeed to speak of the wisdom of God, but immediately fell into self-elation, saying, xxvii.

Ver. 9. *What knowest thou that we know not? What understandest thou which is not in us?*

Which same sentences plainly shew in what exaltation of mind all that comes forth, which sounds as if it were for defence of the Lord. It goes on;

Ver. 10. *With us are both the grayheaded and very aged men, much elder than thy father.*

33. That all Heretics are gone out of the Holy Church xxviii.

Job 15, 11—13. ALLEG. 1 John 2, 19. Universal, John testifies, when he says, *They went out from us, but they were not of us.* But that those things which they maintain they may recommend to the weak minds of their fellow-creatures as on the grounds of antiquity, they testify that they have ancient fathers, and the very Doctors of the Church themselves they declare are the masters of their school; and whilst they look down upon present preachers, they pride themselves with unfounded presumption on the tutorage of the ancient fathers, so that they avouch that the things they themselves assert the old fathers held as well, in order that what they are not able to build up in truth and right, they may strengthen as by the authority of those. But because it is written, *Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth,* oftentimes Holy Church travails with countless adversities in this life, and the life of the children of perdition is let to go free of the scourge, in proportion as it is not reserved for any rewards. But Heretics seeing the tribulations of Holy Church, look down upon her, and fancy that she is bruised by such a multitude of strokes, in due of a false creed[1]. Hence it is yet further added;

Heb. 12, 6.

[1] professionis

Ver. 11. *Is it a great thing that God should console thee? But thine evil words prevent this.*

xxix. 34. As if he said to him in plain words; 'If thou wouldest amend thy profession of faith, thou mightest long ago have had consolation in thy scourges.' It goes on;

Ver. 12. *Why does thine heart lift thee up, and hast thou thine eyes astonished as thinking of great things?*

xxx. 35. Often the mind of the righteous is so suspended in contemplating things on high, that outwardly their face seems to have been struck with stupefaction. But because Heretics are not taught to enforce the power of contemplation in secret, they think that it is done by the just, and those that are imbued with a right understanding, more in hypocrisy than in truth, in that what they cannot themselves obtain the possession of, they do not suppose exists in others in a genuine way. It goes on;

Ver. 13. *Why doth thy spirit swell against God, that thou lettest such words go out of thy mouth?*

xxxi. 36. Very often when the righteous are afflicted with any

woes, they are forced to confess their works, as blessed Job had done, who after just living was pressed down by the strokes of the rod; but when the unrighteous hear their sayings, they think that they are uttered in self-exaltation rather than in truth. For they weigh the words of the righteous by their own feelings, and do not think that good words can be said in a humble spirit. For as it is a great sin, for a man to ascribe to himself what there is not, so it is commonly no sin at all if he speaks with humility the good that there is. Hence it often happens that the just and unjust have words that are like, but always a heart that is widely unlike, and by the same sayings for which the Lord is offended by the unrighteous, He is even propitiated by the righteous. Thus the Pharisee when he entered the temple said, *I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess.* But the publican went out justified more than he. Hezekiah too, the king, when he was afflicted with sickness of the body, and brought to the last point of life, said with his heart pierced in prayer, *Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before Thee in truth, and with a perfect heart.* Nor yet did the Lord disregard this confession of his perfectness, or refuse him, whom He immediately heard effectually in his prayers. See, the Pharisee justified himself in act, and Hezekiah maintained himself to be just in thought as well, and by the same act by which the one offended, the other propitiated God. Wherefore then was this, but that Almighty God estimates the words of each by the thoughts within, and in His ear those are not high, which are uttered with a lowly heart? Hence blessed Job, when he put forward his deeds, did not in the least degree swell out against God, in that those things which he had really done, he spoke with a humble spirit. Now Heretics are accustomed to mix some true points with the statements of their erroneous persuasions. And the friends of blessed Job, though in the reproving of him they are altogether deceived, may yet even say some things true, which they learnt by frequent communication with him. Whose words were they all to be contradicted, the Apostle Paul would never have brought forward the sentence of Eliphaz, saying, *He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.*

Book XII.

Luke 18, 12.

Is. 38, 3.

1 Cor. 3, 19.

Job 15, 14. Lit. Moral. And so, because those things which they say right, they do not rightly say against blessed Job, let us in their sayings at once tread under our feet the mischief of indiscretion, and sift the marrow of rightness. It goes on;

Ver. 14. *What is man, that he should be clean?*

xxxii. 37. For hereby alone that he is called 'man' he is described as earthly and weak; for man is so named[a] from the earth. And how is it possible for him to be free from stain, who being made of earth of his own will fell into infirmity? where it is added; *And he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?* For the first piece of unrighteousness the woman proffered to the man in Paradise. And so how shall he appear righteous, who was born of her that proved the bidder of unrighteousness? It goes on;

Ver. 15. *Behold, among His saints there is no one that is unchangeable; the heavens are not clean in His sight.*

xxxiii. Myst. Ps. 19, 1. 38. He repeated that with the title of 'the heavens,' which he before denoted by the appellation of the 'Saints.' For it is written concerning those very Saints; *The heavens are telling the glory of God;* all of whom have by nature in themselves changeableness proper to them, but while they earnestly desire to attach themselves always to the unchangeable 'Truth,' in attaching themselves they bring it to pass that they become unchangeable; and whilst they keep themselves fixed thereto with a full affection, they one day obtain that being carried above themselves, they get the better of this, that in themselves they were changeable. For what is changeableness but a kind of death? which while it changes one thing into another, as it were kills that which was, that that should begin to be which was not. And it is written concerning the Author of all things, *Who only hath unchangeableness*, in that He only is unchangeable in Himself. Concerning whom it is written by James; *With Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of changing.* For changeableness itself is a shadow, which if it altered the light by any changes, would as it were obscure it. But because in God changeableness entereth not, 'no shadow of changing' intercepts His Light. Now it is well said, *the heavens are not clean in His sight*, in that by themselves before the strict cognizance of God

1 Tim 6, 16. Jam. 1,

[a] 'homo' from 'humus,' as Hebrew 'Adam.'

not even they can be clean to perfection, who are preachers of cleanness, as John testifies, who saith, *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.* If then 'among His Saints there is no one unchangeable, and the heavens are not clean in His sight,' who may presume in himself upon the practice of righteousness? Hence it is further added; Book XII. 1 John i, 8.

Ver. 16. *How much more abominable and useless is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?*

39. He who first said it was impossible that man should of himself be clean from sin, and righteous, calls him 'abominable' and 'useless;' 'abominable' on account of the uncleanness of his stain, but 'useless' on account of the unrighteousness of an imperfect life; who however may be understood as 'abominable and useless' in another sense. For often a bad man seems to do some things rightly, but by those things which are wrong, even those which are right belonging to him are brought to nought; and because the evil ones are very displeasing to God, neither are those pleasing which seem to be good. And so he, that is 'abominable' before God in his evil things, is 'useless' in the good; in that whilst he shews himself an object of execration to God by wicked deeds, neither is that which seems right proceeding from him well-pleasing. And it is well said, *Which drinketh iniquity like water.* For what is eaten is swallowed not without delay, seeing that it is chewed in order to be swallowed; but what is drunk has no hindrance to be swallowed, in proportion as it hath again no need to be chewed. And so because sin is committed by the foolish man without any drawing back, *iniquity is drunk like water.* For because he does unlawful things without fear, he swallows the draught of iniquity without let or hindrance. It goes on; xxxiv.

Ver. 17. *I will shew it thee, hear me; and that which I have seen I will declare to thee.*

40. All arrogant persons have this proper to them, that when they have a right notion, though the thing be little, they wrest it to serve the turn of pride, and by the same act whereby from understanding they might to themselves be raised higher, from swoln pride they only fall into the pit of self-exalting, and account themselves better instructed than the learned, and they exact respect for themselves from their xxxv.

Job 15, 18—20. Allegor. betters, and stand upon it to teach as with authority those that are holier men. Hence it is now said, *I will shew thee, hear me.* And because he teaches with less authority who tells things that he has heard, than he who tells those things which he has seen, in order that Eliphaz may claim to himself the stronger kind of authority, he says, *And that which I have seen I will declare.* But because Heretics are sometimes confounded by their fathers being condemned, and yet bring forward as it were with authority the sentences of those, by whose folly they are deservedly rejected; the very audacity of Heretics is itself rightly introduced, when it is said,

Ver. 18. *Wise men confess, and do not hide their fathers.*

xxxvi. 41. And at once they leap out in praise of them, and boast that they had been as it were the only rulers of the Church. Hence it is yet further added, *Unto whom alone the earth was given, and the stranger passed not among them.* They think that 'the earth was given to their fathers alone,' in that the masters of their erroneous teaching alone really had rule in the Church. And who is termed 'the stranger,' but the Apostate Angel? Whence too it is said by Ps. 54, 3. the Psalmist concerning all the wicked spirits together; *For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul.* And so Heretics, because they think that the hearts of their doctors were not subject to the Apostate Angel, say that 'the stranger passed not among them.' For which same stranger to pass through each individual, is his putting wicked thoughts into his heart. And hence it is said by the voice of the Prophet of the evil spirits arrayed against Is. 51, 23. the soul standing erect, *Which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over.* But whereas Eliphaz the Temanite, when going to tell some things, wishes to be heard, though he knows many things which were proper to be said, and yet does not know that they were not proper to be said to blessed Job, let us hear the sentences which he uttered against blessed Job. For neither ought we to consider the person to whom, but only what it was that he said. It goes on;

Ver. 20. *The wicked man feels proud all his days.*

xxxvii. 42. The Elect also are apt to feel pride in some of their

thoughts and actions. But because they are Elect persons, they cannot feel pride all their days, because before they end their lives, they turn their hearts from self-exaltation to the fearing of humility. But 'the wicked man feels pride all his days,' in that he so brings his life to an end, that he never departs from self-exalting. He looks round him on all that is flourishing in time, and he neglects to consider whither he is being carried for ever. He puts his trust in the life of the flesh, and thinks that those things continue for long, which he holds at the moment. His mind is set firm in self-exaltation, every one of his kin is brought into contempt, how suddenly death creeps upon him he never takes thought, how uncertain his happiness he never reflects; whereas if he did but turn his eyes to the uncertainty of fleeting life, he would never keep for a certainty things uncertain. And hence it is well added;

And the number of the years of his tyranny is uncertain.

43. For he ought not to have felt pride at all, even if he might have had the number of his years assured, so that knowing how long he should live, he might know beforehand when to withdraw himself from self-exaltation. But since the present life is always uncertain, death's creeping upon him ought always to be apprehended the more, insomuch as it can never be foreseen. And he rightly calls the pride of the wicked, 'tyranny.' For he is justly styled a tyrant, who in the commonwealth takes the lead without right. And be it known that every proud man, according to his several measure, exercises tyranny. For what sometimes one person practises in the commonwealth, in this case, by power of high office accorded to him, another in a province, another in a city, another in his own family, this same another by concealed wickedness practises to himself in the thought of his own heart. Nor does the Lord regard what amount of evil each person may be able to do, but what amount he may have the mind to do. And when the power is wanting without, he is a tyrant within himself, whom iniquity lords it over within; for though he does not oppress his neighbours outwardly, yet inwardly he seeks to possess power, in order to oppress them; and because Almighty God considers the hearts of men, the wicked man has already done in xxxviii.

Job 15, 21. his eyes the thing that he conceived. Now our Creator willed that our end should be hidden from us with this view,

Lit. Moral. that whereas we are uncertain when we may die, we may always be found ready for death. Hence after it has been said, *All his days the wicked man feels proud*, he rightly adds, *and the number of the years of his tyranny is uncertain.* As if it were said in plain words, 'Wherefore is he lifted up as if on the grounds of a certainty, the tenure of whose life is held under the penalty of uncertainty?' But Almighty God not only reserves future punishments for those that live wickedly, but even here, where they go wrong, he besets their hearts with punishments, that by this alone, viz. that they sin, they should be smiting themselves, and that always trembling, always full of suspicion, they should be afraid of meeting with those mischiefs from others, which they remember themselves to have done to others. Whence it is yet further added of this wicked one;

Ver. 21. *A dreadful sound is alway in his ears, and when there is peace, he suspecteth plots.*

xxxix. 44. But there is nothing more happy than simplicity of heart, in that in proportion as it shews forth innocency towards others, there is nothing it dreads to meet with from others. For it has its simplicity as a kind of citadel of strength, nor is it suspicious of undergoing what it has no remembrance of having itself done. Whence it is well said

Prov. 14, 26. by Solomon, *In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence.*

Prov. 15, 15. Who also says again, *A secure mind is like a perpetual feast.* For the mere repose of security is like the continuance of refreshment. Whereas, on the other hand, the evil mind is always set in pains and labours, since it is either contriving mischiefs that it may bring down, or fearing lest these be brought down upon it by others; and whatever plot it hatches against neighbours, it is afraid of being hatched by neighbours against itself. It is on every side full of suspicions, on every side full of alarms. Every one that occurs to mind is supposed to be making out things hostile to him, and so he, to whom the repose of security is wanting, has surely 'a dreadful sound in his ears' always. And it often happens that his neighbour, whoever he be, speaks to him with a single intention, and designs nothing hostile, but 'when there is peace,

he suspecteth plots;' in that he, who is always dealing craftily, calculates that there is not single dealing towards himself. And whereas it is written, *When the wicked man cometh into the pit of sinners, he contemneth*, he being encompassed with the darkness of his iniquity henceforth despairs of light. Hence too it follows; Book XII. Prov. 18, 3.

Ver. 22. *He believeth not that he shall return out of darkness, and he is waited for of the sword.*

45. For because he believes himself to be on all sides stricken from ambush, despairing of salvation, he is ever growing on in wickedness. Now there are times too when this ungodly man turns his eyes to judgments from above as well, and dreads their coming upon him. But whilst he seeks the wages of the present life, these same judgments which he had begun to fear, being conquered by the madness of avarice, he sets at nought. And he thinks indeed that it is possible he may die in sin, but yet he does not cease from sin. Hence it is subjoined; xl.

Ver. 23. *When he has stirred himself to seek bread, he knoweth that the day of darkness is ready in his hand.*

46. For 'bread' is the wages of the present life, and 'the day of darkness' is taken for the time of vengeance. And so in the course of his conduct, the wicked man at times weighs well the present wrath of the Judge Above, but he is not diverted from wickedness, so that it too should be itself diverted from his destruction. But his conscience accusing him, he fears to be smitten, yet he is ever increasing that whereby he should be smitten. He makes slight of his return, he despairs of pardon, he carries himself high in sin, yet he has fear within, a witness of his wickedness. And though he seem outwardly to be doing wicked things with a bold front, yet for these in his own heart he is untrained to tremble. Whence it is written; *For whereas wickedness is timorous, she gives witness to condemnation.* For when a man does unlawful things, he is in dread of the thing that he does; and the open witness for his condemning is the very fearfulness of wickedness itself, in that both the thing that is done is feared, and yet the evil that is feared is not overcome. Of which it is yet further added, xli. Wisd. 17, 11.

Job 15, 24. Lit. Ver. 24. *Trouble shall make him afraid, straits shall besiege him, as a king ready to the battle.*

Moral. xlii. 47. In all that the wicked man does, he is hedged in with anguish, and tribulation, and straits; in that his soul is confounded with anxiety and misgiving. One man secretly longs to seize another's goods by force, and he toils and strains in the thoughts of his heart, that he may not be found out. Another man, forsaking truth, makes up his mind to tell a lie, that he may deceive the mind of those that hear him; but what great labour it is to guard with sufficient heed, that his deceit itself may not be found out! For he sets before his eyes what answer may be made to him by those that know the truth, and with great effort of thought he makes out how by the appliances of falsehood he may surpass the evidences of truth. He cloaks himself about on this side and on that, and against that wherein he might have been found out, he looks about for an answer resembling truth, whereas if he had been minded to tell the truth, assuredly he might have done it without pains. For the path of truth is smooth, and the road of falsehood grievous. Jer.9,5. And hence it is said by the Prophet, *They have taught their tongue to speak lies, and wearied themselves to commit iniquity.* Therefore it is well said, *Trouble shall make him afraid, and straits besiege him;* in that in himself he is undone in the toilsomeness of fear, who forsakes the way of truth, which is the companion of security. And he is rightly compared to *a king prepared for battle*, seeing that in that very evil that he does he is at once alarmed and presses on; at once made to tremble by conscience, and to pant from desire; fears, and swells high; is scared with misgivings, and lifts up his spirit in audacity. Moreover, we are to know that 'a king who is prepared for battle' is so apprehensive against the enemy, that he also fears for that very army which he is leading, lest it should be seduced, lest by the desertion of his soldiers he be laid open to the darts of the enemy. And so 'the wicked man is besieged with straits, like a king ready to the battle;' in that whilst practising false things and uttering false words, he dreads lest he should lose his own soldiers; i. e. the appliances of falsehoods; and lie exposed

to the darts of truth, if it chance that that be lacking to him, which he might have to oppose on the side of deceit. But though the spirit trembles, though conscience accuses, yet the wicked man is mastered by his own passion; and forcing under fear, he assumes hardihood from his iniquities. And often when revenge is set before his mind, he lifts himself up against God; he determines to undergo any inflictions at His hands, so long as in this life, while he has the power, he may do all that he pleases. And hence it is added; Book XII.

Ver. 25, 26. *For he hath stretched out his hand against God, and is strengthened against the Almighty; He runneth upon Him with erected neck, and he is armed with a stout neck.*

48. These things are more plainly understood of the head of the wicked himself, i. e. Antichrist, who, while lifting up his hand against God, is said to be 'strengthened,' in that for a little time he is permitted to be exalted; that in proportion as he is let to glory for a while, he may be punished the more pitilessly for everlasting; but seeing that all the wicked are his members, this, which he then in the end of the world shall do alone in a preeminent way, let us see how it is done now by each one of the wicked severally. Thus there are some who even if they do ever set themselves to do things in opposition to the judgment of Almighty God, disabled by the very impossibility of putting their will in execution, look to themselves, and are made to turn themselves to Him Whom they were minded to despise, and they, who might have gone far from Him, if they had been able to execute what they were minded to do, are sometimes hereby saved, because they could not execute what they wickedly had the mind for; and hence being brought back to themselves, they see what condition they are of, and mourn that they had the mind to do things contrary to 'Truth.' And there are some, who by the just judgment of God are suffered to execute with worse wickedness that which they wickedly desire to do in opposition to God. And whilst an evil disposition inflames, and power strengthens them, they are henceforth unable to attain to know themselves in their erring course, in proportion as in the affluence of their fortunes they are by power ever being drawn out of themselves. Concerning the xliii.

Job 15, 27. bent of whose mind it is here said, *For he stretcheth forth his hand against God, and is strengthened against the Almighty.* For 'to stretch forth the hand against God,' is to persevere in evil doing, setting at nought the judgments of God. And because God is then more wroth, when He suffers that to be fulfilled, which thing ought not to have been conceived at all in thought, this wicked man is 'strengthened against the Almighty,' in that he is suffered to prosper in his wicked course of conduct, so that he should both do wicked things, and yet live in happiness. Of whom it is yet further added, *He runneth upon Him with erected neck.*

Lit. Moral.

49. To 'run against God with erected neck' is to commit with shamelessness such things as are displeasing to the Creator. Of whom it is rightly said, *He ran*, i. e. in doing evil, he had no let or hindrance from adversity. Concerning whom it is yet further added; *And he is armed with a stout neck*[1]. 'A stout neck' is wealthy pride, as being buttressed up with overflowing stores, as it were with a quantity of flesh. And so the bad man with power 'is armed against God with a stout neck,' in that swollen with temporal good things he is set up as by a great bulk of flesh against the precepts of truth. For what is poverty but a sort of leanness, and what is the abundance of stores but the fatness of the present life? And so he lifts himself up 'with a stout neck against God,' who takes temporal abundance to serve the end of pride. For the powerful and wicked have this thing proper to them, that being engrossed with deceitful riches they neglect the true riches of God, and in proportion as they investigate the less what is true, they are the more lifted up by false acquisitions. For the care and concern of earthly things, because it engrosses, utterly blinds the sight. Whence it is yet further added with justness,

[1] pingui cervice.

Ver. 27. *Fatness hath covered his face.*

xliv. 50. For the sight is in the face, wherein too is the first more honourable part of the body. Therefore the bent of the mind is not unjustly denoted by the face, which wherever we turn it, there we see. And so 'fatness covers the face,' in that the earnestly coveted abundance of earthly good things presses down the eyes of the mind, and that which

should be honourable [b] in them, it makes foul in the eyes of God, in that it weighs it to the earth with a multitude of concerns. Who do not however find it enough that they themselves should be full of pride, unless those too that are united to them, themselves also are made boastful by their fatness. For there are some who on being countenanced by the patronage of the greater ones, are set up with pride, and on the strength of their power uplifted against the destitute. Hence it is yet further subjoined; Book XII.

And the fat hangs from his sides.

51. Because the fat is the richness of the flesh, and we are accustomed to call those persons the 'sides'[1] of the rich, whom we see united to them, 'the fat hangs down from his sides,' in that every one that attaches himself to the powerful and wicked man is by his power himself also as it were swollen with the fatness of good things, so that following the wickedness of an evil patron he has no fear of God, he distresses the poor, whom he is able, and as much as he is able, and uplifts his heart on the strength of temporal glory. So when there is such an one who is attached to a powerful wicked man, 'from his side,' surely enough, 'the fat hangs down.' Concerning whom it is yet further added; xlv. [1] latera

Ver. 28. *And he dwelleth in desolate communities, and in deserted houses, which are become heaps.*

52. For as a 'community' has its name from the intercourse of persons living together in common, 'desolate communities' are the actual throngs of wicked followers, by whose shouts this bad man is commended, when he is hurried away by his wickedness into evil deeds. Whence it is written; *The sinner is commended in the desires of his soul, and he that doeth unrighteousness is blessed.* But 'deserted houses' are bad thoughts, which this wicked man inhabits, in that by all that he does he seeks to please the thoughts of the wicked. Which communities are rightly called 'desolate,' and houses 'deserted,' in that except Almighty God had abandoned the dealings and thoughts of such on account of their previous sins, they would never arrive at the commission of worse ones. And it is well said, *Which are reduced to heaps.* For the ruined buildings of houses and cities make heaps; xlvi. Ps.10,3.

[b] A. B. C. D. more honourable.

Job 15, 29. Lit. Moral. in that whilst the wicked severally are joined to one another for wicked deeds in confused courses of conduct, they shew without doubt, that they have fallen from the edifice of life. It goes on;

Ver. 29. *He shall not be inhabited, neither shall his substance continue, neither shall he send forth his root into the earth.*

xlvii. 53. That which is here expressed, *He shall not be inhabited*, I have found in some copies, *He shall not be enriched;* but the sense is not at variance, though the phraseology is at variance. For he is 'enriched' with virtuous attainments whose mind is 'inhabited' by Almighty God. But because the thought of the proud man is not 'inhabited' by the grace of his Maker, hereby surely he is not 'enriched' with virtues. On this account then that he is empty within, let it be said, *He shall not be inhabited.* But in respect to that which is swollen up without, being of a transitory nature, it is rightly added, *Nor shall his substance continue.* As though it were said in plain speech, 'This which he seems to have outwardly passes away, and what was not capable of passing away, he has not within.' And hence it is fitly subjoined, *Neither shall he send his root into the earth.* Which if we take as spoken of this earth, doubtless it is plain, that the tree which has no root in the earth, is brought to the ground on being shaken by the very slightest gales of wind; and every proud man while he is 'strengthened against the Almighty Lord,' while he 'runs with erected neck,' and is 'uplifted with a stout neck against his Maker,' is seen to stand like a tree; but his standing is without root, in that as it were at a light breath, so at the stirring of the secret sentence, his life is rooted up. But if in this passage we take 'the earth' for the recompensing of the Eternal Country, concerning which the Prophet saith, *My portion is in the land of the living*, this wicked man does not 'send forth his root in the earth,' in that he never plants the thoughts of his heart into the desire of the eternal life. For what the root is to the tree, the same is the thought of his own heart to each one of mankind; for in the case of that which is seen outwardly, there is a holding by that which is not seen outwardly[a]. And hence

Ps. 142, 5.

[a] al. 'which (being) within is not seen.'

it is said by the Prophet, *Shall again take root downwards, and bear fruit upwards.* For when we stretch our thought in sympathizing with a poor neighbour; 'we as it were send a root downwards, that we may bear the fruit of recompense above.' It follows; Book XII. Is. 37, 31.

Ver. 30. *He shall not depart out of darkness.*

54. If this proud man had been minded to turn back from sin to righteousness, he might 'depart out of darkness.' But because he seeks not the light of righteousness, he does not depart out of darkness. After whose example, those likewise, who attach themselves to him outbreathe themselves in making earthly advancements, are kindled with the torches of avarice, and scorched with the fires of carnal desires. And hence it is added, xlviii.

The flame shall dry up his branches.

55. For if he united to himself any that were searching after the Eternal Country, he would have green 'branches' in himself. But because they that are joined to him, are also heated with earthly passions, and the flame of passions kindles the hearts of his followers, it doth surely 'dry up his branches,' that they should not bear the fruit of good works, seeing that for the chace after the lowest objects they pant in wickedness. And it is well added, xlix.

And by the breath of his mouth shall he be taken away.

56. For the proud man, in proportion as he is more strong in this life, the more shamelessly lets loose for himself the reins of his tongue, so as to utter bad things of every sort, to apprehend no man for his words, to wound these with insults, to cast at those with curses. But sometimes he is carried away into blasphemy against his Creator, as it is said by the Psalmist of such persons, *They set their mouths against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.* And hence the rich man, being set in the fire, implores to have water dropped for him on his tongue by the finger of Lazarus. By which circumstance it is perceived that in that part where a man has sinned most, there he was the more fiercely burned. Therefore it is rightly said now, *And by the breath of his mouth shall he go away;* in that he received sentence of smiting, in proportion as he did not l. Ps. 73, 9.

Job 15, 31. 32. restrain the breath of his mouth under the fear of God. It goes on;

Lit. Moral. Ver. 31. *Let him not believe, being vainly deceived, that he is to be redeemed with any price.*

li. 57. As often as we do alms after sin, we as it were pay a price for bad actions. Whence too it is said by the Ps. 49, 7. 8. Prophet concerning him who doeth these things not, *He will not give God his propitiation, nor the price of the redemption of the soul.* But sometimes the rich being elated oppress those below them, seize on the things of another, and yet in a certain way give somewhat to others, and whilst they bear down multitudes, they sometimes render the support of defence to particular persons, and for the iniquities which they never abandon they seem to offer a price. But the price of alms then frees us from sins, when we lament and renounce things we have been guilty of. For he who would both always be sinning, and as it were always bestowing alms, gives a price in vain, in that he does not redeem his soul, which he does not keep from evil habits. Hence it is now said, *Let him not believe, being vainly deceived, that he is to be redeemed with any price.* For the alms of the rich and proud man has no efficacy to redeem him, seeing that his robbery of the poor man committed at the same moment, will not allow it to rise up before the eyes of God. Which same may likewise be understood in another sense; in that it often happens that proud men of riches, when they bestow alms, do not give it for the desire of the eternal life, but for the extending of the temporal life; they think that they can put off death by gifts, but *let him not think, being vainly deceived, that he is to be redeemed with any price;* in that he is not able to secure by the gift bestowed, that he should escape the end that is due to him, when his very wickedness cuts asunder his life. Hence too it is added;

Ver. 32. *Before his days are fulfilled he shall perish, and his hands shall wither.*

lii. 58. The days foreordained to each individual by the Divine Prescience can neither be increased nor lessened, except it happen that they be so foreknown as either to be longer if they be accompanied with the most perfect works,

or shorter with the most wicked, just as Hezekiah obtained increase of days by the bestowing of tears, and as it is written concerning the wicked, *Death meets the undisciplined*[a]. Yet oftentimes the wicked man, though in the secret foreknowledge of God no protracted periods of life may be predestined him, himself, forasmuch as he desires to live after the flesh, sets length of days before his imagination. And because he cannot attain to that time that he looks forward to, he, as it were, 'perishes before his days are fulfilled.' Which same we may likewise understand in another sense also. For very commonly we see persons that both lead wicked lives, and attain to the very extreme of old age. How then is it said, *Before his days are fulfilled, he shall perish;* when in the case of particular persons we often see, that their limbs already fail from age, and yet their passions do not cease to carry out their wickedness?

59. For there are some, who after a lost way of life turn back to themselves, and their conscience accusing them, forsake their froward ways, alter their doings, withstand their old wickedness, flee earthly courses, and pursue heavenly aims, but before they be firmly rooted in those holy aims, from deadness of mind they return to the things which they began to pass sentence on, and fall back to the evil habits which they had determined to eschew. For whereas it often happens that for the profit of many, even holy men bow their necks to external actions, and are busied with the governance of a people, the weak seeing this, and, from their former pride still by them, seeking to follow their example, set themselves in outward ways of action; but in proportion as they do not come thereto well imbued with the things of the Spirit, they execute them in a carnal manner. For except the heart be first confirmed in heavenly desires by long application and a continued conversation, when it is poured back again for the executing of things exterior, it is rooted out from all its standing in good practice. Whence too it is rightly said of this wicked man, *Before his days are fulfilled, he shall perish.* In that even if he begin perchance to do any thing good, before he is strengthened therein by length of time, he falls back to outward things, and wickedly abandons what he appeared to

[a] Ed. Ben. suggests that this may be taken from Eccles. xx. 9.

Job 15, 33. 34. Moral. have entered upon rightly. And hence it is fitly added; *And his hands shall wither;* in that whilst he is prematurely involved in exterior actions, he is 'dried up' of all good practice. Hence it is yet further added aright;

Ver. 33, 34. *His cluster shall be spoilt like a vine in the first flower, and like an olive casting its flower. For the congregation of the hypocrite shall be barren.*

liii. 60. It is to be observed that the Divine Word so speaks of this wicked man in general terms, that yet it comes down to his particular wickedness. For he that on saying, *His cluster shall be spoilt like a vine in the first flower, and like an olive casting its flower;* directly adds, *For the congregation of the hypocrite shall be barren*, plainly makes it appear that in this wicked man it is against his hypocrisy that he passes sentence of condemnation. Now we have to consider how it is that the hypocrite is 'spoilt like a vine in the first flower, or like an olive casting its flower.' If the vine in flowering be touched by excessive cold in an inequality of the weather, it forthwith makes it dry of all moistness of verdure. And there are some, who after bad courses long to follow ways of holiness, but before that good desires are confirmed in them, as we have said, some piece of good fortune of the present life comes upon them, which entangles them with outward concerns, and whilst it withdraws their mind from the heat of interior love, as it were puts it out by cold, and whatever seemed to be shewing itself of the blossom of virtue in them, it kills. For in earthly courses of action the mind grows very cold, if it be not yet by the interior gifts firmly settled. Whence it follows that higher stations or exterior works, which are intended to be of use to the necessities of man, those persons should take upon them to put them in execution, who have skill to judge of them, and to force them to bow beneath themselves in the power of interior virtue. For when any frail person is drawn away either to the post of government or to execute exterior employments, in proportion as he is as it were carried out of himself, he is rooted up, in that the tree, which does not first send roots deep below, is the sooner laid low by the impulse of the winds, if it lifts itself on high in its top; and is the more speedily brought down

to the very lowest, in proportion as it grew higher in the air without roots. But sometimes the vine in flower is dried, not by the cold but by the heat, and when it is touched by excessive heat, its flower being shed, the cluster is made to wither. And it very often happens that they who do not come to good works with a right intention, when they see that they please their fellow-creatures, are the more vehemently inflamed to execute the same good works, anxiously set themselves to do what is calculated to please the eyes of men, and are as it were heated in a holy devotedness. What then but heat in the time of the blossom has come upon these, whom the appetite of human applause has made bare of fruit? Hence it is well added, *And like the olive casting his flower.* For when the olive is in flower, if it be touched by an immoderate fog, it is bared of the fulness of fruit. And as often as people that are entering on good works, begin to be extolled by those that behold them, and to take delight in the commendations of themselves, there is caused a mist of the understanding in the thoughts, that they can now no longer discern with what intention they do a thing, and lose the fruit of practice as it were by the fog of applause. Hence it is well said by Solomon, *Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vines flower, if the blossoms bear fruit.* 'The vines flower,' when the minds of the faithful put forth good works; but they do not 'bear fruit,' if in what they may have purposed, they are disabled, from being overcome by certain erring practices.

Book XII.

Cant. 7, 12.

61. We have not then to look whether the vines flourish, but if the blossoms are strong for the bearing of fruit, in that it is not any thing to admire if a man begins good works, but it is much to be admired, if with a right intention he holds on in good works. Whence it very often happens that if in good practice a right intention is not kept, even the very work itself which is supposed good is lost. For we have often seen persons abandon the earthly things which they possessed, and henceforth seek nought transitory, and be mixed up with no jarrings for the sake of this life. When then the believing mind exhibits this in itself, it is as if the olive put forth blossom, but when any of this sort begin to seek the glory of the world which they had contemned, and

Job 15, 33. 34. Moral. to pant with insatiable desire after the earthly things which they appeared to have disdained, to give themselves to brawls, to seek out mischiefs upon their neighbours; then indeed the olive has cast her flower, which she put forth, in that she never brought to perfect works the beginnings of a good purpose. But we are to bear in mind that such things are often happening to those who do not follow God with a pure and single aim. Hence it is rightly added, *For the gathering of the hypocrite is barren.* For the good things he has begun he would not lose, if he had not been a hypocrite. Now hypocrites gather together good works, but their gathering itself is barren, in that in the things they do they never make it their object to receive fruit in the eternal recompensing. They look fruitful and green to the eyes of their fellow-creatures, but in the sight of the hidden Judge they appear unfruitful and blasted. But oftentimes, being inflamed with the fever of avarice, they display greater works of their own before the eyes of men, in proportion as they desire to have larger rewards offered them by their fellow-creatures. Hence it is yet further added;

And fire shall consume the tabernacles of those who are ready to take rewards.

liv. 62. For as the body dwells in a tabernacle, so the mind dwells in thought. But the 'fire consumes the tabernacles,' when the heat of avarice wastes the thoughts. And it very commonly happens that the hypocrite scorns to receive gold, or the several good things of the body, at the hands of his fellow-creatures, but because he does not take these, he aims to win greater commendations from them; and perhaps he does not reckon that he has 'received a reward,' because he refuses to take the good things of the body. Hence it is proper to be known that a gift is sometimes proffered by the hand, and sometimes by the mouth. Thus one who presents money, has given a reward with the hand; but he that bestows the word of applause, has put forward a reward from the mouth. Though, then, the hypocrite refuse to take external gifts, which may perhaps answer earthly necessity, yet that is a greater thing which he aims to have paid him in return, when desiring to be extolled beyond his desert, he seeks a reward from the mouth. And

because in the mere appetite of praise his heart is kindled with overmuch heat, let it be rightly said, *And fire shall consume the tabernacles of those that are ready to take rewards.*

63. But if we are to understand by their 'tabernacles' the bodies which their souls inhabit, then the fire consumes the 'tabernacles,' because those who here are on fire in the soul with the flames of avarice, are there consumed in the flesh too by the fires of hell, and because the mind of the hypocrite is never at rest from the thinking of wickedness, in that whether he goes after the things of earth, or applause, he grudges those things to others, which he pants to have awarded to himself, and strives to make others appear wicked in proportion as he desires to appear more holy to all the world, so that by means of this, that others are rendered contemptible, he may himself at all times appear more worthy of respect. Whence it comes to pass, that as touching his credit with his neighbour, he spreads out the nets of his tongue before the judgments of his fellow-creatures, that he by himself may catch the good opinion of those whom he seeks to please. Whence too it follows;

Ver. 35. *They conceive woe, and bring forth iniquity, and their womb prepareth deceit.*

64. For he 'conceives woe,' when he devises wicked things; he 'brings forth iniquity,' when he has begun to fulfil what he has devised; by entertaining envy, he 'conceives woe;' by uttering slanders, he 'brings forth iniquity.' For it is grievous wickedness when he who is wicked strives to make others appear wicked, that he may himself thereby appear as holy, because he has shewn that others are not holy. But we ought to bear in mind, that in Holy Writ by the title of the 'belly' or the 'womb' the mind is used to be understood. Hence it is that it is said by Solomon, *For the candle of the Lord is the breathway of man, searching all the inward parts of the belly.* For the light of grace, which comes from above, affords a 'breathway' to man unto life, which same light is said to 'search all the inward parts of the belly,' in that it penetrates all the secrets of the heart, that the things which were hidden from the soul touching itself it may bring back before the eyes thereof with weeping. Hence Jeremiah

lvi.

Prov. 20, 27.

Job 15, 35. saith, *My bowels! my bowels! I am pained.* Who, that he might shew what he had called his belly, added, *the senses of my heart are troubled.* So by the title of the womb the mind is rightly understood, in that like as the offspring is conceived in the womb, so is thought engendered in the mind. And as meats are contained in the belly, so are thoughts in the mind; and so the 'womb' of the hypocrite 'prepares deceits,' in that he is ever conceiving in his mind the greater wickedness against his neighbours, in proportion as he aims to appear by himself above all men innocent. Eliphaz therefore put forward these things, in that he looked upon blessed Job as stricken with that great scourge on account of his hypocrisy. But his words, though they apply to many, are at odds with him alone, for whom alone they were said, in that the holy man had nought of double-dealing in his conduct, whom Truth being witness to him praised for the singleness of his heart.

Moral. Jer. 4, 19.

BOOK XIII.

Wherein is contained a short exposition, moral and typical, of the sixteenth and seventeenth chapters of the book of Job.

1. THIS is found to be a peculiar way with the wicked, viz. to urge their own bad points slanderously against the good, before they are themselves truly accused of them; and while they dread to be reproached for the things which they do, they testify that the righteous who withstand their wickednesses commit the same. Now holy men bear with forbearance, even what they never remember to have done, although those wrong things which they see to be urged against themselves, they know to be committed by their very accusers; and when they cannot correct them by preaching, they suffer them by submitting to the evil, that if they cannot attain the fruit of their conversion, they may at least win by those very persons the reward of long endurance. Hence Holy Church says in the words of the Prophet David, *Sinners have plowed upon my back*, in that whilst she puts up with heretics, or lost persons of any kind, whom she is not able to correct, she bears upon her back the deeds of those that commit iniquity. Thus blessed Job, seeing Eliphaz his friend making much complaint against him out of hypocrisy, in that from words of comfort he had broken out into bitterness of upbraiding, and shewed himself a feigned comforter, does by his own patience maintain a type of the Church, which is wont to endure such things in hearing them, and when her discourse is received, by reasoning to bring them to nought; and he says, HIST. ALLEG. i. Ps. 129, 3.

Ver. 2. *I have heard many such things.*

2. For the Elect often hear the wrong things of others, as if they belonged to themselves, and guilt is charged upon ii.

Job 16, 2. Hist. Alleg. them by those, by whom the charges so fastened on them are done. Now by this reply, blessed Job denotes that season of the Church, when, under oppression from her adversaries, she is looked upon as cast to the ground by their temporal power. Whence it follows; *burthensome comforters are ye all.* Whether they be heretics, or whether any of the wicked, when they see the good travailing in adversity, herein that they aim to console them, they endeavour to prompt wrong things to their minds. Whence not without reason their consoling is rendered burthensome to the mind of good men, in that amongst words of sweetness, they are bent to proffer the poison of error, and whilst in seeming they lighten their griefs by soothing words, they are in haste to put upon them a load of sin. But Elect persons, even when they are bereft of temporal glory, do not lose the forcibleness of interior judgment. For they are taught both to endure crosses without, and yet unimpaired within to uphold what is right without being daunted. Whence it is added,

Ver. 3. *Shall windy words have an end?*

iii. 3. For those are 'windy words,' which serve the end of temporal inflating, rather than the end of righteousness. Now oftentimes the wicked speak even good things, but because they do not say them well, they are putting forth 'windy words:' for their words, even if they be at any time sound in the sentence, are yet blown out in self-elation. But in this that is said, viz. *burthensome comforters are ye all;* what else are we taught by the tutorage of blessed Job, but that every one should learn to look to it heedfully, that in the season of sorrow he never urge words of upbraiding? For if there be some points which might be justly found fault with in time of distress, they ought to be put aside, lest the comforter by rebuking heighten the sorrow, which he had it in view to alleviate. It goes on;

Or is there any thing troublesome to thee, if thou speakest?

iv. 4. When bad men utter abusive words to those that are like to themselves, they are the more quickly silenced, in proportion as they in a moment hear concerning themselves the like to what they say to their hearers. But when they assail good men by words of contumely, nought of annoyance

is occasioned them by their abuse, in that they speak against those that hold their peace, nor are made to hear what they are, seeing that the righteous never return abuse, even when they are made to hear what they are not. And so it is well said, *Or is there any thing troublesome to thee if thou speakest?* As if it were said in plain words to him; 'Thou speakest the more, that thou hearest not from me any thing unpleasant concerning thy conduct.' Hence it is added, *I also could speak as ye do.* The just man tells what he had the power to do, but lest he should depart from righteousness, he forbears what he might have done. It goes on; Book XIII.

Ver. 4—6. *And O that your soul were for my soul! I too would comfort you with speeches, and move my head over you: I would strengthen you with my mouth, and move my lips as if sparing you.*

5. It is sometimes necessary that wicked minds, which are incapable of being corrected by man's preaching, should have the strokes of God wished for them, in a spirit of kindness; and while this is done with great earnestness of love, then plainly not the punishment but the correction of the guilty person is the thing aimed at, and it is shewn to be a prayer rather than a curse. And in these words blessed Job is shewn to aim at this, that the friends, who knew not how to sympathize in his grief through charity, might learn by experience how they ought to have pitied the affliction of another, and being subdued by griefs might draw from their own suffering, how to minister consolation to others, and then live the more healthfully within, when they are made sensible of something of frailty without. Observe that he does not say, *O that my soul were for your soul;* but, *O that your soul were for my soul;* in that he would have been cursing himself, if he had wished himself to be made like to them; but it was for them he wished better things, in that he sought they should be made like to himself. Now we 'comfort' bad men, placed under the rod, when we point out that by the exterior infliction the interior health is established within them. Moreover, we 'move our head,' when the mind, which is our leading part, we bend to sympathy; and we 'strengthen' these in the midst of strokes of v.

Job 16, 4—6. affliction, when we soothe the force of their grief with gentle words; for there are some persons, who, forasmuch as they know nothing of the things of the interior, are overwhelmed with despair by external afflictions; of whom it is said by the Psalmist, *They shall not hold up in afflictions;* for he is well instructed to hold up in outward afflictions, who knows how to exult always in the hope that belongs to the interior.

Hist. Alleg.

Ps. 140, 10.

6. But whereas he says, not, 'sparing,' but, *as if sparing you;* I think that this point ought not to be passed by carelessly, in that Holy Church, while keeping vigorousness of discipline together with an union of gentleness, sometimes even while 'as if sparing,' is far from sparing the wicked, but sometimes, when 'as if not sparing' does spare them; which we shall exhibit the more effectually, if we bring forward the very things themselves which are not unfrequently happening. So then let us place before the eyes of the imagination, two bad men set within the pale of Holy Church, of whom let the one be powerful and insolent, and the other mild and under government. If a fault has stolen upon the one that is gentle and under government, the preacher directly by rebuking the thing follows hard upon him, and corrects him; and by correcting frees him from guilt, and resets him again in the way of righteousness. What did he then to this man, but spare in sparing not? in that, forasmuch as he did not hold back the word of correction, he the more speedily set him free from sin. For in freely charging him home, he did not spare him; but in this respect, that he rebuked him, he did spare him. But on the other hand, the powerful and insolent man, when he is discovered to have been guilty of any thing, there is an opportunity sought, in order that he may be rebuked for the evil he has committed. For except the preacher wait till such time as he may be able to bear correction in a proper way, he increases in him the evil that he is prosecuting. For it is very often the case that he is of such a character as to receive no words of rebuke. What then is the preacher to do in the case of the sin of this person, but that in the charge of admonition, which he makes for the general well-being of all his hearers, he should bring forward such faults, as he sees that he has been guilty of, who is by, and cannot as yet be charged on his own account individually,

lest he be rendered worse? and while invective in general is aimed against the fault, the word of rebuke is readily brought home to the mind, in that the powerful bad man does not know that it is delivered against himself in particular. What then did his preacher to this person, but in sparing not spare? against whom he at once brought not words of rebuke with any special reference, and yet hit his wound under a general admonition; and hence it is very often brought to pass that he bewails the sin committed so much the more bitterly, in proportion as even when he feels himself struck, he supposes his guilt not to be known. Book XIII.

7. Therefore it must be managed with wonderful art in preaching, that those who are made worse by open rebuke, may by a certain abatement of rebuke be brought to a state of saving health. Whence too Paul saith, *And those members of the body which we think to be less honourable, upon those we bestow more abundant honour, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness; for our comely parts have no need.* For as there are uncomely members in the body, so there are persons within the bosom of Holy Church, powerful and insolent, who, whereas they do not admit of being stricken with open upbraiding, are as it were cloked with the respectfulness of a covering. But this we speak of the secret transgressions of the powerful; for when they sin and others know of it, they are also to be rebuked, and others should know of it; lest, if the preacher hold his peace, he seem to have sanctioned the sin, and this which the tongue of the pastor does not cut off, going on increasing, should come to be an example. Thus while Holy Church by her preachers rebukes particular deeds of wicked men under the covert conveyance of a general reproof, she 'moves her lips, as if sparing;' but yet while sparing spareth not, in that she does not in general hold her peace to the reproving of a fault, which in the special case she does. It goes on; 1 Cor. 12, 23. 24.

Ver. 7. *But what am I to do? Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged; and though I forbear, it will not depart from me.*

8. How this accords with the person of blessed Job, there is no one that is ignorant; but if it be drawn into a type of Holy Church, she both when she speaks 'has not her grief vi.

Job 16, 8. 10. Allegor.

assuaged,' since she does not see the wicked amended by her speaking; and 'when she holds her peace, her grief does not depart from her;' in that though she turns away and holds her peace, this very circumstance of her being silent she laments the more, in that while she is silent, she sees the sin of the wicked grow to a height. It proceeds;

Ver. 8. *But now my grief has oppressed me, and my limbs are brought to nought.*

vii. 9. Holy Church is oppressed by her grief, when she beholds the wicked grow to a height in their wickedness; and whereas while the wicked increase, the weak too that are in her are set on to follow the bents of wickedness, it is rightly added, *And all my limbs are brought to nought.* For as the strong by 'bones,' so by 'limbs' the weak sort are wont to be denoted, and so 'the members of the Church are brought to nought,' when by the imitating of the wicked that are increased in this world, all the weak are worse weakened. For on seeing the prosperity of the wicked, they often slide away from their very stand in faith itself, they seek after temporal good things, and are in a manner 'brought to nought;' in that while they abandon the Being of God that is lasting, loving things that are transitory, they are, as it were, on their way to be not. And it is well said, *But now my grief has oppressed me;* in that the season of the grief of the Church is now, and the time of her joy shall follow hereafter. Now it often happens that Holy Church not only meets with unbelievers and those without her borders as her adversaries, but with difficulty bears with the plots and opposition of those too, whom she has within her. Whence it is fitly said directly by the voice of the blessed man;

Ver. 10. *My wrinkles speak a testimony against me.*

viii. 10. What is denoted by 'wrinkles,' but doubledealing? and so all they are wrinkles of Holy Church, who therein live in doubledealing, who avouch the faith with their voices, disown it by their works. These persons doubtless in time of peace, because they see that with the powers of this world that faith is an honour, falsely feign themselves of the number of believers; but when a sudden storm of adversity disquiets Holy Church, they thereupon shew what they are going after in their heart of unbelief. Now these 'wrinkles'

Holy Church has not in her Elect, in that they have not the art to shew one thing in themselves on the outside, and to hold another withinside. Whence the great Preacher says truly, *That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle.* For she 'has not spot or wrinkle,' in that she is without both foulness of practice, and doubleness of tongue; but because now she holds within the bosom of the faith numbers even of the children of perdition, when the time of persecution blazes out, she bears those very persons for her enemies, whom she seemed before to be nourishing with words of preaching. Therefore let her say, *My wrinkles speak a testimony against me;* i. e. those very persons, while they persecute, inveigh against me, who now, being fixed in my body, do not mind in themselves the wickedness of their doubledealing. Whence it is rightly added yet further; Book XIII. Ephes. 5, 27.

And the liar is lifted up against my face, gainsaying me.

11. Even in her time of peace Holy Church is subject to the 'liar,' in that there are numbers in her, who disbelieve in the promise of eternal life, and yet falsely feign themselves to be of the faithful. And as they do not dare openly to gainsay her preaching, she is exposed to the liar, not, as it were, 'before her face,' but behind her back; but when the time of wickedness breaks out, he who now disparages being full of apprehension, comes 'before the face to gainsay,' in that he withstands by open sentences of the voice the words of true faith. But it is to be known that when we meet with such things at the hands of carnal men, it is not so much they individually that rage cruelly in our death, as the evil spirit who rules their minds, as it is said by Paul, *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood; but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world.* Whence, whereas here also he is speaking of lying[1], with propriety he turns his words directly to tell of the prince of that lying, and says; ix. Ephes. 6, 12. [1] A.B.D. 'the liar.'

Ver. 9. *He gathered his fury against me; and threatening me he gnashed against me with his teeth; mine enemy looked on me with terrible eyes.*

12. What else are all wicked men but members of the devil? Therefore he himself does by them, whatever he puts x.

Job 16, 9. 10. Allegd. it into their hearts that they ought to do. For the devil even now entertains fury against Holy Church, but his fury is scattered, in that he sets afoot his secret temptations through the agency of individuals; but when he bursts out against her in open persecution, 'he gathers his fury against her,' in that in the afflicting of her he knits up himself with the entire bent of his efforts. But his members in this time of peace have not 'fury gathered' against the Elect in this way, because they feel that they have less power to fulfil their wickedness than they have will; but when they see full range of wickedness at their command, they smite at her the more boldly, in proportion as they are drawn to a head against her in unanimity. And so it is rightly said now; *He gathered up his fury against me.* And that his fury might be still more fully set forth, it is said, *And threatening me, he gnashed upon me with his teeth.* Of whom too it is added, *mine enemy looked on me with terrible eyes.* For that ancient enemy of the Church 'gnashes against her with the teeth,' and 'looks on her with terrible eyes,' in that he executes cruelties by one set, and by another provides cruelties to execute.

13. For 'the teeth' of this enemy are the persecutors and executioners of the good, who mangle her members, while they distress her elect ones by their persecutions. But the 'eyes' of this enemy are those, that provide measures to her hurt, which they may put in practice, and by their counsels light up the cruelties of her persecutors. Thus her old enemy 'gnashes upon her with his teeth,' so long as by the cruel children of perdition in her he hunts down the life of good men within her. He 'looks on her with terrible eyes;' in that, by the counsels of bad men, he never ceases to make out schemes of mischief, by which he may torment her ever worse and worse; for as Incarnate 'Truth' in His preaching chose poor common persons and simple men, so on the other hand that accursed man, whom the Apostate Angel will take on him at the end of the world, shall choose for the preaching of his falsity, the cunning and double-minded, and such as have this world's knowledge. Hence it Is. 18, 1. is said by Isaiah, *Woe to the land, the cymbal of wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia. Which sendeth ambassadors by the sea even in vessels of papyrus upon*

the waters. For the land, that has woe pronounced against it, is principally that accursed man, who is called a 'cymbal of wings,' in that they who in pride soar up into the height of imagination, by preaching sound forth that man of iniquity. Which same land is rightly described as being 'beyond the rivers of Ethiopia,' for Ethiopia sends forth a black people, and whereas this world brings forth every man a sinner, Ethiopia as it were bears a black people. And the land that has woe pronounced against it, is described as being 'beyond the rivers of Ethiopia,' in that that accursed man is so exceedingly and beyond all measure bad, that he goes beyond the sins of all that commit iniquity; and he 'sends ambassadors by the sea,' in that he spreads his preachers over the world; and it is rightly told of them, how they are sent, when it is said, *in vessels of papyrus upon the waters*, for from the 'papyrus' paper is made. What then is denoted by the 'papyrus' but secular knowledge? and so the vessels of papyrus are the hearts of the learned of the world. Therefore 'to send ambassadors upon the waters in vessels of papyrus,' is to put the preaching of him in the brains of the carnally wise, and to call the people running out into sin. Those very persons then who are there denoted by 'vessels of papyrus,' here, in that they see with a carnal sight, are denoted by 'eyes.' Of whom it is yet further added;

Ver. 10. *They have gaped upon me with their mouth, reproaching me.*

14. Lost sinners open their mouths 'in reproaching,' when they at once do not fear to proclaim the mischiefs of their errors, and laugh to scorn the announcements of the right faith: with regard to whom be it known that they chiefly prosecute those in Holy Church, whom they see likely to be of service to many, who bruise the life of the carnal by the word of correction, and change them spiritually into the body of the Church. Hence it is added; xi.

They have smitten me upon the cheek; they have taken their fill of my punishments.

15. For 'the cheek' of the Church, are the holy preachers, as where it is said under the figure of Judæa, by Jeremiah, xii.

She weepeth sore in the night, and the tears are on her Lam. 1, 2.

Job 16, 11. 13. *cheeks.* For in the adversities of the Church those mourn the most, who are used to crush the life of the carnal by preaching; for by these very persons Holy Church breaks and bruises the wicked to bad habits, and as it were swallowing them converts them into members of herself. Hence it is said to the first preacher himself too, as to a 'cheek' of the Church, *Kill and eat.* It is hence too that Samson laid hold of the jawbone of an ass, and destroyed his enemies; in that our Redeemer, with the Hand of His power laying hold of the simplicity and submissiveness of these that preach, killed the carnal to their bad habits. And the jawbone thrown down upon the earth, afterwards poured out water, in that the bodies of the preachers given over to death, shewed great miracles to the people. So the wicked 'smite the cheek' of Holy Church, when they persecute good preachers; and whereas lost sinners thus reckon themselves to have done something great, when they do put an end to the life of the preachers; after the striking of 'the cheek,' it is properly added, *They have taken their fill of my punishments,* for that punishment does fill them to satisfaction, which chastises the mind of the Church in an especial manner. It goes on;

Acts 10, 13. Judges 15, 16.

Ver. 11. *God hath shut me up with the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked.*

xiii. 16. The people of the Elect is 'shut up with the ungodly man,' when its flesh is given up in this present time to the persecutions of our old adversary; and it is 'turned over,' not to the spirit, but 'the hands of the wicked;' in that in proportion as they cannot take it captive in mind, they are the more pitilessly inflamed against the flesh thereof. But the People of Holy Church, when it begins to suffer adversities to an extreme degree, and sees the weak ones in her going off to worse and worse, recalls to mind the times of her peace, when she fed her faithful children with the richness of her preaching Hence it is fitly added;

Ver. 13. *I, the same that was once rich, am crushed on a sudden.*

xiv. 17. Herein, viz. that he declared himself to be 'crushed on a sudden,' he denoted the unguarded mind of weak persons: who, whilst they are not skilled to foresee the evils

which are destined to come, find them more severe in proportion as they also undergo them contrary to expectation. But to stedfast minds adversities do not come on a sudden, in that they are foreseen before they come. And this Holy Church too does now undergo in certain backsliding people, who, after the richness of instruction, are sometimes so crushed by sudden assaults of evil, that they fall as deeply in certain wicked practices, as if they had never been vouchsafed the food of the word. It proceeds; Book XIII.

He hath held my neck, and broken me in two, and set me up for His mark.

18. As in evil the 'neck' denotes pride, so in good it denotes the lifting up in freedom; whence it is sometimes the case that 'pride' itself is also put for the authority belonging to that lifting up; as when the Lord says by way of promise to Holy Church by the Prophet, *I will set thee for the pride of ages.* And because in time of persecution some that are weak do not dare to preach with freedom the truths they have a sense of, it is rightly said of this enemy, *He hath held my neck, and broken me in two.* But perchance those are denoted by the appellation of 'neck,' who, in the season of her peace, are lifted up more than befits, and by occasion of defending the cause of right minister to the evil of self-exalting; which same in time of persecution feel adversity the more sensibly on this account, that they are elevated by prosperity. Concerning whom it is rightly said, *He hath held my neck, and broken me in two;* i. e. the pride which she had in her weak members, He bowed down by the severity of His smiting. *And set me up for His mark.* It is known that 'a mark' is for this reason 'set up,' that it may be hit by the sending of the arrow. And so the faithful people is 'set as a mark' to its enemy, in that he is ever assaulting it with his blows and afflicting it with his persecutions: for he that undergoes perpetual ills in this life, as if set for a mark, receives blows from one striking him; and hence the great Preacher, when he was suffering the ills of persecution, and groaning beneath the persecuting efforts of his enemies, to comfort the tender soul of the disciples touching his troubles, says, *For yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.* As if he said to them in plain words; XV. Is. 60, 15. 1 Thes. 3, 3.

Job 16, 13. Allegorical. 'Wherefore at this season do ye wonder at my wounds, when, if we seek the joys of the eternal world, we have come hither for this, even to be stricken?' It proceeds;

Ver. 13. *He hath compassed me about with His lances, He hath wounded my loins together, He hath not spared, and He hath poured out my bowels upon the ground.*

xvi. Moral. 19. These particulars would seem to accord with blessed Job after the letter, in that it is said, *He hath compassed me with His lances, He hath wounded my loins together, He hath not spared;* if that were not added, which is not read as written about him, *he hath poured out my bowels upon the ground.* From which circumstance it follows, that whereas we cannot find this after the letter, we should investigate after the spirit those points, which in his words sound as of the fact of history. Holy Church is 'beset with lances' by her enemy, whensoever she is in her members assaulted by the cunning assailant with the darts of temptation; and it is well said that we are 'encompassed with lances,' in that our old enemy assails us on every side with the wounding of temptation. Thus oftentimes whilst the appetite is restrained, that lust may be brought under, the dart of vainglory strikes the mind; but if the body is not worn down by the infliction of abstinence, the flame of lust kindles itself against the soul: often whilst we strive to observe economy, we fall into stinginess; and often whilst we give profusely the things we possess, we are led into avarice, in that we seek to make up again what we may have to give. Whereas then the darts of the old enemy assail us in every direction, it is rightly said now, *he hath compassed me about with his lances.* And because, in the case of every sin, the crafty enemy indeed recommends it, but we by consenting to his recommendations execute it, it is fitly subjoined, *he hath wounded my loins together*, for in the loins lust is seated. Hence he who desired to eradicate the delight of lust from the heart, preached the words, *Gird up the loins of your mind.* 1 Pet. 1, 13. And so when our old enemy draws the faithful people into lust, surely he smites that people 'in the loins;' in which place it is deserving of observation, that he does not say 'he has wounded[1],' but, *he hath wounded my loins together.* For as to talk is sometimes an act of one person,

[1] '*vulneravit*' '*convulneravit*'

but to 'talk together' of two or perhaps of many, so our old enemy, in that he does not hurry us into sin without our own will, is never said 'to wound our loins,' but, 'to wound our loins together:' in that what he prompts us amiss we fulfil by following of our own will; and, as it were, 'wound ourselves together' in union with him, because we are at the same time led to commit the evil deed of free will. It goes on; *he hath not spared;* as if he said, 'he hath not ceased;' *and he hath poured out my bowels upon the ground.* What else are we to understand by 'the bowels' of Holy Church, save the minds of those who contain in themselves certain of her mysteries, who are devoted to the interior Sacraments? But our old adversary, when he draws over to secular concerns any of the faithful, who appeared to be devoted to the interior sacraments, does, surely, 'pour out her bowels upon the ground;' in that he treads those down in things below, who were before buried from sight in secret and spiritual practices. It goes on; Book XIII.

Ver. 14. *He hath broken me with breach upon breach.*

20. In her weak members Holy Church is 'broken with breach upon breach,' when sin is added to sin, that transgression should be brought to a more dreadful pitch. Thus for him, whom avarice forces to robbery and robbery leads into deceit, so that the sin committed is further defended by falsehood, how else is it with this man, but that he is *broken with breach upon breach?* When too it is well said by the Prophet; *Cursing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and adultery, have overflowed, and blood toucheth blood.* For by the title of 'blood' sin is used to be denoted; whence one who longs to be set free from sin exclaims in penitence, *Deliver me from blood*[1]. So 'blood toucheth blood,' when sin has heaped on sin; and whereas when breach is added to breach, the powers of our old enemy are the more terribly increased against us, it is rightly added; xvii. Hos. 4, 2. Ps. 51, 14. [1]*sanguinibus*

He runneth upon me like a giant.

21. The enemy is easy to be resisted, if he is not consented to, whether in many backslidings, or in one for a continuance. But if the soul has been accustomed to submit to his persuasions, the oftener it subjects itself to him, it makes him the harder to itself to bear, so that it has not the power xviii.

Job 16, 15. 16. Allegor. to struggle against him; in that our wicked adversary, 'like a giant,' fights against it, when it is vanquished by bad habit: yet very often Holy Church, even after sins have been committed, brings back the minds of the faithful to penitence, and cleanses away the sins of practice by the efficacy of a voluntary self-chastening. Whence it is well added;

Ver. 15. *I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin, and covered my flesh with ashes.*

xix. 22. What ought to be understood by 'sackcloth and ashes,' but penance; what by 'the skin' and 'the flesh,' but sin of the flesh? And so whereas there are persons who after the backsliding of the flesh are brought back to penance, it is as if 'sackcloth were sewn upon the skin,' and 'the flesh covered with ashes;' because the guilt of the flesh is 'covered with ashes' by penance, that it should not be seen for its avenging in the inquest of the strict Judge. But Holy Church, when she withdraws her weak members from sins, and conducts them to the remedy of penance, these she surely aids with her tears, that they may recover strength to receive the grace of their Maker, and in the strong she bewails what she has not done, which yet in her weak members she has as it were done herself. Hence it is well added yet further;

Ver. 16. *My face is swelled with weeping.*

xx. 23. For 'the face' of Holy Church are those, who being set in posts of governorships appear the foremost, that in their goodly appearance should be the honour of the faithful people, even if there were aught deformed in the body hidden from sight. Which same persons that are set over the people bewail the sins of those that go weakly, and so chasten themselves for the downfall of others as if for their own. And often when they see some returning to pardon after sin, and others persisting in wickedness, they marvel at the secret counsels of Almighty God, but cannot fathom them. For they are dumb at the things which they do not understand. And hence it is fitly added;

And mine eyelids have become darkened.

xxi. 24. For they are rightly entitled 'eyelids,' who are on their watch for the fore-ensuring the paths of the feet; but when not even the rulers on the watch can understand the

secret judgments of God, 'the eyelids' of Holy Church are 'darkened;' but, as I remember that I have already often said, blessed Job, while bearing a type of Holy Church, uses at one time the voice of the body, and at another time the voice of the Head; and while he is speaking of her members, he is raised on a sudden to speak the words of her Head. Whence here too it is added;

Ver. 17. *I have suffered this without the wickedness of mine hand, whilst I made pure prayers to God.*

25. He suffered without the wickedness of His hand, *Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth*, and yet endured the pain of the Cross for our redemption. Who only above all others 'made pure prayers to God,' in that even in the very anguish of His Passion He prayed in behalf of His persecutors, saying, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* For what can be described, what can be conceived more pure in prayer, than when the mercifulness of intercession is vouchsafed even those, from whose hands pain is undergone? Whence it was brought to pass, that that Blood of our Redeemer, which His persecutors in raging had spilt, afterwards in believing they drank, and proclaimed Him to be the Son of God. Concerning which same Blood it is fitly subjoined;

1 Pet. 2, 22.

Luke 23, 24.

Ver. 18. *O earth, cover thou not my blood; and let my cry find no place to lie hid in thee.*

26. It was said to man on his committing sin, *Earth thou art, and unto earth shalt thou return;* and this 'earth' does not 'cover the blood' of our Redeemer: in that each several sinner taking to himself the price of his redemption makes confession and sings praise, and publishes it to all of his neighbours that he is able. Moreover, 'earth did not cover His blood,' in that Holy Church has now preached the mystery of His redemption in all parts of the world. And observe what is added: *And let my cry find no place to lie hid in thee.* For the very blood of redemption that is taken is itself 'the cry' of our Redeemer. Hence Paul too says, *And to the Blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.* It had been said of the blood of Abel; *The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground.* But 'the Blood of Jesus speaketh better things

xxiii.

Gen. 3, 19.

Heb. 12, 24.

Gen. 4, 10.

Job 16, 19. Allegorically.

than the blood of Abel,' because the blood of Abel brought the death of his fratricidal brother, but the blood of the Lord won life for His persecutors. So then that the Sacraments of our Lord's Passion may not be ineffectual in us, we are bound to imitate that which we take, and to preach to others what we adore. For 'His cry does find a place to lie hid in us,' if what the mind has been brought to believe the tongue is silent about. But that His cry may not lie hid in us, it remains that each one of us according to his small measure should make known to his neighbours the mystery of his own quickening. It is good to recall the eyes of the interior to the hour of the Lord's Passion, when the Jews raged against Him in persecution, and the Disciples fled from Him in alarm. For He that appeared to die in the flesh was not in any wise believed to be God. Hence it is properly added in this place,

Ver. 19. *Also, now, behold my witness is in heaven, and my heart's associate*[1] *is on high.*

[1] '*conscius meus*,' lit. '*my accomplice*,' '*he who knows my mind.*'

27. For when the Son was brought to His downfall on earth, there was a witness to Him in heaven. Since the Father is the witness of the Son; concerning Whom He Himself saith in the Gospel, *And the Father Himself, Which hath sent Me, hath borne witness of Me.* Who is also rightly called 'mine heart's associate,' in that with one will, and with one counsel, the Father acts always in union with the Son. Whose witness too He is, in that *no man knoweth the Son but the Father.* Thus He had then 'a witness in heaven,' and His 'heart's associate' on high, when they, who saw Him dying in the flesh, had their eyes closed to see the power of His Divine nature; and whereas men did not know, yet in the hour of death the Mediator between God and man did know, that the Father was working together with Himself. Which perhaps may be likewise applied to the voice of His Body. For Holy Church for this reason undergoes the miseries of this life, that the grace above may lead her on her way to the rewards of eternity. She slights the death of her flesh, because she is intent on the glory of the resurrection; and what she suffers is transitory, what she expects everlasting, concerning which same everlasting blessings she has no misgiving, in that she has already a

xxiv. John 5, 37. Mat. 11, 27.

faithful testimony in the glory of her Redeemer. For she sees with the mind the resurrection of His flesh, and is strongly fortified to have hope, in that what she sees already brought to pass in her Head, she hopes without doubting will also follow in His Body, which is herself. Which same Church the Psalmist seeing destined to continue in everlasting perfection, describes her under the title of the moon. *A perfect moon for everlasting.* And whereas the Resurrection of the Lord heartens her to entertain the hope of a Resurrection, he properly added, *And a faithful witness in heaven.* Forasmuch as that she may not tremble for her own resurrection, she has Him in heaven for a witness, Who rose again from the dead; and so let the faithful People when it suffers adversity, when it is harassed with sore tribulations, lift up the mind to the hope of the glory to follow, and trusting in the resurrection of the Redeemer, let it say, *Also now behold my witness is in heaven, and mine associate on high.* Who is also rightly called 'an associate,' in that He was acquainted with our nature, not only by creating, but by taking it upon Himself. For His knowing is His having undertaken what belongs to us. Whence too it is said by the Psalmist, *For He knoweth our frame.* For what wonder is it if He is said emphatically 'to know our frame,' when it is plain that there is nothing that He does not know? But His 'knowing our frame,' is His having taken it upon Himself out of pitifulness.

Book XIII.

Ps. 89, 37.

Ps. 103, 14.

28. Yet this voice may together with blessed Job suitably apply to each one of ourselves as well; for every man who in what he does aims at human praises, seeks a 'witness' on earth; but he that is eager to please Almighty God by his deeds, takes thought that he has a 'witness in heaven.' And it often happens that the very good things themselves in us are found fault with by inconsiderate men; but he that 'has a witness in heaven,' has no need to fear men's reproofs. Hence it is yet further added;

Ver. 20. *My friends are full of words; but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.*

29. For what is denoted by the eye, but the intent of the heart? as it is written, *if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.* For when any thing is done with a

xxv.

Matt. 6, 22.

Job 16, 21. Moral. Hist. good intention, the enacting of that intention contracts no soil in the sight of God; and so when friends are full of words, i. e. when the very same persons detract that are joined with us in faith, 'the eye' must needs 'pour out tears to God,' that so the whole bent of our heart may run out in the piercing of interior love, and lift itself up to the things of the interior, the more exactly that being forced back by external reproaches, it is driven to turn back within, lest it should vanish away without. It proceeds;

Ver. 21. *Oh! that a man were so judged with God, as a son of man is judged with his fellow!*

xxvi. 30. We acknowledge indeed always that we are sinners, yet often, when laid under the rod, we do not know for what sin in particular we are stricken, and we sift ourselves with minute examining, that if we might in any way be able we might trace out the cause of our being struck; and whereas this is for the most part hidden from us, our blindness becomes a load upon us, and we are the more pained at what we are suffering. But any one that 'comes to judgment with his neighbour,' both says what he thinks, and knows what answer is made in return, and strikes a blow where he will, and knows from what quarter he is struck. But he that is smittten with the visitation of God, while he knows indeed that he is beaten, but knows not why he is beaten, as it were himself says what he thinks, but does not know what may be said against him; seeing that he himself indeed groans under the rod, but God does not declare openly for what cause of vengeance He strikes him. Therefore it is said now, *Oh! that a man were so judged with God, as a son of man is judged with his neighbour!* As if it were expressed in plain words; 'As in all, that I say, I am heard, so would that I heard all that is said concerning me.' Which, nevertheless, can never be brought about in this life, in that there is a great obstruction before the eyes of our heart, against our beholding the subtle nature of God, even our mere frailty by itself; but we shall then see Him with clearness by Whom we are now searchingly beheld, when this frailty laid aside, we attain to the grace of the interior contemplation, of which Paul saith, *For then shall I know, as also I am known.* Hence blessed Job, seeing that

1 Cor. 13, 12.

that knowledge can never be in the fullest way perfected here, groans indeed over the blindness of the present life; yet consoles himself by the shortness thereof, saying, Book XIII.

Ver. 22. *When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return.*

31. Every thing that passes is short, even though it should seem slow in being finished, but in the way of death we 'go, and do not return by it,' not because we are not brought back by rising again to the life of the flesh, but because we do not come again to the labours of this mortal life, or to earn rewards by our labours. xxvii.

Chap. xvii. ver. 1. *My spirit shall be wasted to thinness.*

32. 'The spirit is wasted to thinness,' by the fear of judgment; in that the minds of the Elect, the more they feel themselves to be approaching the final Judgment, tremble so much the more fearfully in the searching of their own selves; and if they ever find in themselves any carnal thoughts, they consume them by the fervour of their penance; nor do they suffer their thoughts to expand with carnal delight, in that they pass sentence and inflict punishment on themselves more rigorously in proportion as they are awaiting the strict Judge close at hand; whence it comes to pass, that they look upon their departure as always near. For the minds of the lost do many things wickedly on this account, because they suppose themselves living here for long; and so 'the spirit of the righteous is wasted to thinness,' but the spirit of the wicked is thickened. For in proportion as they swell out in self-elation, they have not the wearing down of the spirit: but the righteous, whilst they consider the shortness of their life, eschew the sins of pride and impurity. And hence it is added; xxviii.

My days shall be shortened, and the grave only is left me.

33. For he that bethinks himself what he will be in death, is always rendered fearful in practice, and from the very cause that henceforth he does not as it were live in his own eyes, he does genuinely live in the eyes of his Creator; he goes after nothing of a nature to pass away, he withstands all the desires of the present life, and views himself as almost dead, in that he is not unaware that he is destined to die. For xxix.

Job 17, 3. a perfect life is an imitation of death, which while the righteous diligently enact, they escape the snares of sins. Eccles. 7, 36. Whence it is written, *Whatsoever thou takest in hand, remember thy latter end, and thou shalt never do amiss.* And HIST. ALLEG. hence blessed Job, because he sees that his 'days are shortened,' and reflects that 'the grave only is left him,' fitly subjoins,

I have not sinned, and mine eye abideth in bitternesses.

xxx. 34. As if he expressed himself in plain words; 'I have not been guilty of sin, and I have undergone scourges.' But on this point, seeing that in many passages of this history he confesses himself to have been guilty of sinning, is the mind moved by the thought with what reason he now denies himself to have committed sin? But with reference to this the reason quickly occurs, in that neither did he sin to such an extent as to deserve strokes of the rod, nor yet was capable of being without sin. For that he was stricken not for the correcting of sin, but the increasing of grace, the Judge Himself bears witness, Who praises while He strikes. And again, that he was not without sin neither does he himself deny, who is commended by the Judge, and therefore commended because he denies it not. But I think that we shall make out these words the better, if we understand them as spoken in the voice of the Head. For our Redeemer, in coming for our Redemption, at once did not sin and did 'undergo bitterness,' in that being without sin He undertook the punishment of our sin, in Whose voice it is added,

Ver. 3. *Set me free, and put me beside thee, and let the hand of any one fight against me.*

xxxi. 35. For *He* did not sin either in thought or deed: *He* was made to 'abide in bitterness' by His Passion, *He* was 'set free' by the Resurrection, He was 'put beside' the Father by His Ascension; in that having gone up into heaven He sitteth on the right hand of God. And because, after the glory of His Ascension, Judæa was stirred up in the persecuting of His Disciples, it is rightly said here, *Let the hand of any one fight against me.* For the madness of the persecutors did then rage on His members, then the flame of cruelty blazed out against the life of the faithful; but where should the

wicked go, or what should they do, whilst He Whom they persecuted on earth was now seated in heaven? Concerning whom it is yet further added; Book XIII.

Ver. 4. *Thou hast removed their heart far from discipline.*

36. For if they had been acquainted with the keeping of discipline, nor ever despised the precepts of our Redeemer, the mere mortal condition of their flesh by itself would have excited them to the love of the life immortal; for this very thing, even our being subject to corruption in this life, is of the scourge of discipline. For to be made to feel annoyance from heat and cold, from hunger and thirst, to be afflicted with diseases, and one day even to be put out of existence, what else are all these, but the scourges of sin? Now there are some that both undergo scourges, and yet never fashion anew their life by the fear of Him Who scourges them. Whence it is rightly said now, *Thou hast removed their heart far from discipline;* in that though the body is under discipline, yet the heart is not under discipline, so long as a person is stricken with the rod, and yet not brought back to humbleness of mind. Nor yet is this spoken in such a sense, as if the Almighty and Merciful God 'removed the heart of man far from discipline,' but that having fallen away of his own accord, there in executing judgment He suffered him to remain, where he had fallen; as we also say to Him in praying, *And lead us not into temptation.* i. e. 'do not ever suffer us to be led into temptation.' It proceeds; xxxii.

Therefore they shall not be exalted.

37. For if the heart were under discipline, it would seek after things above, it would not be openmouthed to obtain transitory good things. Of those, then, whose heart is not under discipline, it is rightly said, *Therefore they shall not be exalted,* in that while let go at large in the lowest enjoyments, they are ever longing for the good things of earth, they never lift the heart to the delights of heaven; for they would be exalted, if they lifted their minds to the hope of the heavenly country; but they, who do not make it their business to guard their way by discipline, ever in their desires lie grovelling in things below, and, what is more grievous, in lying low set themselves up, in that they are uplifted on the ground of things transitory. And they may xxxiii.

Job 17, 5. Allegory. be uplifted, but cannot be exalted, in that they are sunk the deeper below, by the very act by which they are rendered higher to themselves; and so the heart that is without discipline cannot be exalted, in that the human mind, as when elevated amiss it is forced down below, so forced down aright is lifted up on high. It proceeds;

Ver. 5. *He promiseth prey to his friends; and the eyes of his children shall fail.*

xxxiv. 38. After that blessed Job had uttered a sentence relating to the multitude of the wicked, i. e. the body of our old enemy; he directly shifts the sentence to the very leader of them, i. e. the head of all the children of perdition, and returns from the plural to the singular number: for the devil and all wicked people are so one body, that it very often happens that the body is rated with the name of the head, and the head designated by the title of the body. Thus the body is rated with the name of the head, when it is said of a bad man, *And one of you is a devil.* John 6, 70. And again the head is designated by the title of the body, when it is said of the apostate Angel himself, *A man*[1] *that is an enemy hath done this.* Mat. 13, 28. Thus the prince of all the wicked has some for 'associates' and some as 'children.' For who are his associates, but those apostate Angels, who fell with him from the seat of the heavenly country? or what others has he as children, saving bad men, who are begotten by his evil persuading in the practice of wickedness. Whence too it is said by the voice of Truth to unbelievers, *Ye are of your father the devil.* John 8, 44.

[1] Vulg. '*inimicus homo.*'

39. So that evil author of error promises 'prey' to his 'associates,' in that he promises the evil spirits the souls of bad men to be seized at their latter end; *and the eyes of his children shall fail*, in that while he sets on the aims of men to look for earthly things only, he causes them to love that which they cannot keep for long: for neither can the bent of misdirected love remain, when it appears that both that which he loves, and he himself, who loves it, are tending to nought at a rapid rate. It may also be, that by 'the associates' perhaps are understood all those that are most cruel and already full of every kind of wickedness; but by the sons, those who being still deluded by beguiling promises, are

being nourished up to increasing of wickedness; that henceforth the devil should as it were by the title of wickedness, have these as his 'associates,' who now no longer have whereunto to grow in perdition, while these he has as sons, whom he suckles with promises, that they may go on advancing to worse. But 'the eyes of his children shall fail,' in that the aims of the wicked fall to the ground, when all that they go after here, they leave behind, and there suffer without end what is fitted to fill them with grief. It proceeds; Book XII.

Ver. 6. *He hath made me, as it were, a byword of the people, and I am an example before them.*

40. This let blessed Job say in his own person, yea and in the voice of all of the Elect. For every one that is stricken with the rod, is, as it were, 'made a byword of the people,' in that every fool, when he desires to curse any one, takes up his cursing in a likeness to him, whom he sees stricken with a temporal stroke, and wishes that punishment for his adversary, which he sees to have befallen the righteous man. And so it comes to pass that with persons not endowed with a right perception, the upright man is brought into an example, while both the punishment of the just passes current for the condemnation of him, and the glory that is in store for him is not foreseen by any expectance of faith. It proceeds; xxxv.

Ver. 7. *Mine eye is dim, for indignation, and all my members are as it were brought to nothing.*

41. For 'the eye is dim for indignation,' when those very persons likewise, who in the Lord's Body, i. e. in the Church, are endued with the light of truth, whilst they see themselves too long despised and disdained by the wicked, are confounded in astonishment at the inscrutable judgment, and fail to fathom the secret of God; for what reason it is that the wicked are suffered to prevail against the innocence of the good? For who is not amazed, when Herodias by her daughter's dancing obtains at the hands of the drunken king, that the head of that *Friend of the Bridegroom*, that '*Prophet, and more than a Prophet*,' should be brought before the faces of his guests upon a charger? Now when the just are 'dimmed in indignation,' the weak very commonly go head- xxxvi.

Job. 17, 8, 9. Alleg. long into actual infidelity; whence it is added, *And my members are as it were brought to nothing.* For by the term of 'members,' we have the tenderness of the weak set forth, who, while they behold bad men flourishing, and good men tormented, are sometimes brought to this pass, that they regret that they even began in good things, and so speedily fall back to doing evil things, as if the good they had begun were a detriment to their life. But this that he says, *Mine eye is dimmed in indignation*, he unfolds in plainer words, when he adds;

Ver. 8. *Upright men shall be astonied at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite.*

xxxvii. Lit. 42. In this place, 'the innocent' is taken for the as yet imperfectly righteous, who, as yet but commencing in good ways, though he is not minded to do mischief to others, yet is not at all able himself to do things that are perfect; and because the hearts of the little ones, while they see the wicked flourishing in the present life, are set on fire with the brands of envy; (for a man the more envies others present good in proportion as he less despises it himself. Since of that which cannot be possessed by all men all of it together, what this one has would be so much lacking[1] to the other.) Now 'the innocent is kindled against the hypocrite,' when even he who is not used to injure any one, envies the glory of the dissembler. But if in this passage the innocent means any one perfect in goodness, 'the innocent is moved against the hypocrite;' when he both sees him flourishing, and contemns him and all his flourishing, and by preaching the things that are right plainly says that he ought to be despised by others, the more in proportion as he sees him eagerly in quest of things, which cannot abide with him for long, and in this point of view it is yet further added;

[1] 'desit' al. 'defit,' or 'deficit.'

Ver. 9. *The righteous also shall hold on his way, and to clean hands he shall add strength.*

xxxviii. 43. On considering the hypocrite, 'the righteous holds on his way,' in that whilst he sees that it is by a wicked will that he obtains the things that are of the world, he is himself tied and bound the stronger to the love of heavenly things, knowing that to good desires eternal rewards shall not be wanting, whereas both to bad and double hearts the good

things of time are not denied; from which circumstance it comes that 'to clean hands he adds strength,' in that seeing bad men win temporal glory, he brings his good works to perfection, and looks down upon temporal things from the loftier height in proportion as he sees them to abound even to the wicked. For he sees how much those things deserve to be despised, which Almighty God vouchsafes even to bad men: for if they were primarily great, the Creator would never vouchsafe them to His adversaries; and hence he considers that it is to himself an unworthy thing, that he should go after that good, which he sees to abound even to the wicked; but he applies his mind to the winning of heavenly blessings, which can never be shared with him by the children of perdition. Thus after he had introduced the outward advancements of the wicked, and the interior advancements of the good, he brought forward words of exhortation, saying, Book XIII.

Ver. 10. *But as for you all, do ye turn and come now.*

44. Which same words of exhortation he properly frames to the Elect, whom he calls to the eternal world; who are bidden in two ways, viz. that they should 'turn,' and that they should 'come;' 'turn' by faith, 'come' by practice. Or indeed that they 'turn' by abandoning evil deeds, and 'come' by doing good ones; as it is written, *Depart from evil, and do good:* but that is wonderful which is added, xxxix. Ps. 37, 27.

And may I not find one wise man among you.

45. For what does this mean, that he bids them to wisdom, and yet wishes that he may not find them wise, saving that they cannot come to true wisdom, who are deceived in confidence in their own false wisdom? Concerning whom it is written, *Woe unto you that are wise in your own eyes, and prudent in your own sight;* and to whom it is said again, *Be not wise with your own selves;* whence that same great preacher sought that those, whom he found carnally wise, in order that they might attain true wisdom, should first become foolish; saying, *If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.* And 'Truth' saith by Itself, *I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from* xl. Is. 5, 21. Rom. 12, 16. 1 Cor. 3, 18. Matt. 11, 25.

Job 17, 11. Lit. *the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.* And so because they that are wise in themselves cannot come to true wisdom, blessed Job, being anxious for the conversion of his hearers, rightly desires that he may not 'find any wise man among them.' As if he said to them in plain speech; 'Learn to be foolish in your own selves, that ye may be truly wise in God.' It goes on;

Ver. 11. *My days are past away, my thoughts are scattered, racking my heart.*

xli. Allegor. Moral. 46. The Holy Church of the Elect sees that the spaces of her life pass in periods of day and night, in that it is hers in adversity to have 'a night,' and in prosperity, 'a day.' For there riseth as it were light unto her from the tranquillity of peace, and night from the grief of persecution. Now as often as after the pauses of rest she returns to the toilsomeness of persecution, growing to a head against her, she testifies that her 'days have past;' in which days, however, she is accustomed to be weighed down with so much the heavier cares, in proportion as she bethinks her that for that very tranquillity of rest a more exact reckoning is required of her by the Judge. For in the tranquil state of peace, at one time she is employed with the profits of souls, at another time she attends to the ministrations of earthly things, which same ministrations of earthly affairs are more burthensome to the minds of good men, in proportion as by the act of looking at them they are torn away though but for a brief space from looking at the things of heaven. Whence blessed Job, whether in his own voice, or the voice of the Church Universal, after testifying that 'his days were past,' thereupon subjoined, *My thoughts are scattered, racking my heart;* in that when temporal glory is gone to the minds of the good, even that charge of earthly stewardship is likewise removed from them, which seemed to be torturing them within their thoughts; for while they aim to be always bent upward for the perception of the things of heaven, by this very circumstance that sometimes in their earthly stewardships they are made to descend to take thought of the lowest matters, they feel themselves to be put to torture. Whence it is brought to pass, that the very hostility of persecution is

itself too changed into a mighty exultation of joy, on account of the repose of the heart that is obtained. Hence it is fitly added; Book XIII.

Ver. 12. *They have changed the night into day.*

47. For 'the thoughts being scattered change night into day,' in that it is sometimes more grateful to the righteous through adversity to undergo sufferings, rather than as the effect of prosperity to be harassed with the charge of earthly ministering. But because they have learnt by paying attention that both adversity passes away, and prosperity dawns again, it is fitly added; xlii.

And again after darkness I look for light.

48. For 'the light is looked for after darkness,' in that after the night of the present life, the light eternal is discerned, or adversity and prospersity do so alternate here, that they do not cease to succeed one another by turns. Whence it comes to pass that even in the light night is suspected, and in the night light is presumed on; as when it is written, *In the day of prosperity be not forgetful of affliction, and in the day of affliction be not forgetful of prosperity.* But mark, forasmuch as we have been redeemed by the grace of our Maker, we henceforth have this boon of heavenly bestowal, that when we are removed from dwelling in our flesh, we are at once carried off to receive heavenly rewards; in that since our Creator and Redeemer, penetrating the bars of hell, brought out from thence the souls of the Elect, He does not permit us to go there, from whence He has already by descending set others free. But they who were brought into this world before His Coming, whatsoever eminency of righteousness they may have had, could not on being divested of the body at once be admitted into the bosom of the heavenly country[a]; seeing that He had not as yet come, Who by His own descending should unloose the bars of hell, and place the souls of the righteous henceforth in their everlasting seat. Hence blessed Job, both feeling the stroke of affliction, and knowing that the recompensing of the righteous was as yet delayed, fitly subjoins; xliii. Eccles. 11, 25.

[a] He says elsewhere that the more perfect souls are admitted now to heaven, where the Body of Christ is, quoting Phil. i. 13. He adds that the less perfect are kept elsewhere, and that all have to wait till the Judgment for their *bodies* to be brought into the heavenly mansions. Dial. iv. 25.

Job 17, 13. 14. Lit. xliv. Ver. 13. *If I wait, hell is mine house; and I have made my bed in the darkness.*

49. For the former Saints could undergo adversity, and yet could not, when brought out of the body, be at once freed from the regions of hell; in that He had not yet come, Who should descend thereinto without sin, that He might set free those, who were there bound by right of sin. And man then 'made his bed in darkness,' when he forsook the light of righteousness by consenting to the crafty Prompter: and whereas in those very regions of hell the souls of the righteous were kept imprisoned without torment, so that both on behalf of original sin they should still go down thereunto, and yet by right of their own deeds not undergo punishment; to have 'made their bed in the darkness,' in a manner, is to have prepared themselves rest in hell. For it was sad weariness[1] to the Elect, after the dissolution of the flesh, not yet to see the likeness of the Creator. Which wearisomeness blessed Job not improperly designates 'darkness.' But whereas this came in the punishment of infirmity, he rightly adds that same infirmity directly, saying,

[1] grave tædium

Ver. 14. *I have said to corruption, Thou art my father, and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister.*

xlv. 50. What does this mean, that he *said to corruption, Thou art my father;* saving that every man descends from an already corrupted origin? and hence it is added, *And to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister;* in this way, viz. that we come into this world at once from corruption itself, and along with corruption itself. For as regards the matter of corruptible flesh, the worm is our 'mother and sister,' in that we both come forth out of corruption, and come with corruption which we carry about us. And if we may understand it in a spiritual sense, nature is not unappropriately called our 'mother,' and habit too a 'sister,' in that we are from the one, and along with the other; which same 'mother and sister' are 'worms,' in that in virtue of a corrupt nature and evil habit we are necessitated, as by a kind of 'worms,' so by disquieting thoughts to be gnawed in the mind. For the corrupted nature of the flesh, and bad habit, in that they generate numberless cares in the heart of our frailty, are well called 'worms our mother and sister.' For

cares gnaw the mind, while they disquiet it. For righteous men do not cease either heedfully to take thought and counsel what they are to do, or thoughtfully to look into it, whither they are destined to be led after the present life. And so because the Elect then, before the Coming of the Lord, both saw that they were in the toils of the present life, and still after the present life did not as yet receive the heavenly blessings, they were made to smart[1] with many thoughts of heart. For they waited for the grace of the Redeemer, and yet by living in the flesh could not attain thereto: whence it is fitly added,

[1] urebantur

Ver. 15. *Where then is now my expectation?*

51. What could be the 'expectation' of the righteous, but God Who justifieth the righteous, Who should freely go down to (what was) the punishment of mankind, and by the efficacy of His righteousness set free the captives of death? For they never ceased to expect His appearing with intent expectation; they knew that it was to come, but they sought for it to come quickly. Wherefore he does not say, 'Where, then, is my expectation?' but, *where then is now my expectation?* For in that he adds, *now*, he shewed that what was to come one day, he desired might come without delay. It goes on, xlvi.

And who considereth my patience?

52. He expressed the longing desire, wherewith whilst set in the flesh he hastes to be redeemed, and brought back from hell to the regions above. And indeed it belonged to but few men to enter into the consideration of these things, that they should learn to think of the labours of the present life, or of the subsequent delay after death. Both of which the just grieved to be subject to before the coming of our Redeemer. And hence it is rightly said, *And who considereth my patience?* Verily, there is not lacking One, to 'consider patience.' But when God does not hear quickly, He is said, as it were, not 'to consider.' For the Redemption of mankind itself, which came at the end of the world, by those who came before from the beginning of the world was accounted slow, in that during a long period of time they were severed from the recompensing of the heavenly things, as Truth testifies, Which saith, *Many prophets and kings have desired to see* Luke 10, 24. xlvii.

Job 17, 16. Lit. *those things which ye see, and have not seen them.* And so as to that which is now said, *Who considereth my patience?* the breathings of fervent desire are laid open. For neither, as we said before, does God forbear to consider the patience of the righteous; but not 'to have regard,' in a manner, means to appear less quickly answering to the aspirations of longing desire, and by lengthened periods of time to delay the grace of His Dispensation. Therefore let him say, *Who considereth my patience?* in that what is short to Him that ordereth, is long to him that loves. Hence, still reflecting on the privations of his delay, he repeats that which he had already said before; and being destined to descend below, he redoubles the voice of his grief, saying,

Ver. 16. *All of mine shall descend into the lowest hell.*

xlviii. 53. Whereas it appears that among those below the righteous are held bound not in places of punishment, but in the bosom of tranquillity above, an important question springs up before us, why it is that blessed Job declares, saying, *All of mine shall descend into the lowest hell;* who even if before the Advent of the Mediator between God and man he had to descend into hell, yet it is plain that into the 'lowest hell' he had not to descend. Does he call the very higher regions of hell, 'the lowest hell?' Plainly because in relation to the loftiness of heaven, the region of this sky may not unappropriately be called the lower region. Whence when the Apostate Angels were plunged from the seats of heaven into this darksome region of the air, the Apostle

2 Pet. 2, 4. Peter says, *For if God spared not the Angels that sinned, but delivered them, dragged down with infernal chains, into hell, to be reserved for torments in the Judgment.* If then relatively to the height of heaven this darksome air is infernal, relatively to the elevation of this air, the earth which lies below may be taken both as infernal, and as deep; and relatively to the height of that earth, even those parts of hell which are higher than the other mansions of the place below, may in this place not unsuitably be denoted by the designation of the lowest hell; in that what the sky is to heaven, and the earth to the sky, the same is that higher hollow of the regions below to the earth.

54. But that is very wonderful which he subjoins, *All of*

mine shall descend; for whereas the soul alone shall descend into the regions of hell, how is it that the holy man tells that 'all of his' shall descend there, but that he saw himself to be there entire where he perceives the great weight of his recompense? seeing that this which he leaves of himself without sense on the earth, until he returns to the incorruption of the resurrection, he does not feel to be himself. And so he declares that 'all of his will descend into the lowest hell,' whither he sees his soul only shall descend; in that the whole of him is there, where he is capable of having a sense of that which he has got. Or, surely, 'all of his did descend into hell,' in that the recompensing of all his toils was as yet expected to be received only in the rest of hell; and all that he has done as it were 'descends' there, in that there he finds rest in his recompensing for all things. Whence also the expected rest is itself added, when the words are thereupon introduced, Book XIII.

Dost thou think at least there will be rest for me there?

55. By which same words he both makes known what he desires, and yet marks that he is still doubtful of receiving the rest, lest he whose holy works so many scourges followed, should by the hidden judgment of the heavenly Judge, after temporal scourges, have lasting torments likewise following him. Wherein it behoves ourselves to consider with exceeding fear which of us is now secure of the everlasting rest, if even he still trembles for it, proclaim of whose virtue the very Judge, Who smites, does Himself sound. *For if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear?* For blessed Job knew that he should attain to rest after the strokes of affliction, but that he might shake our hearts with fear, he himself seemed to doubt about the recompensing of Eternal rest, when he says, *Dost thou think?* plainly that *we* might think well with what exceeding apprehension we ought ever to dread the Judgment to come, if even he, who was commended by the Judge, was not yet in his own words secure of the rewards of the Judgment. xlix. 1 Pet. 4, 18.

BOOK XIV.

Wherein S. Gregory unfolds the historical, allegorical, and moral sense of the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of the Book of Job.

i. Hist. 1. In a former part of this work we have handled the point, that Almighty God, in order to amend the hearts of those under the law, brought forward the life of blessed Job for a testimony, who knew not the law and yet kept it, who observed the precepts of life, which he had not received in writing. This man's conduct is first extolled by God's bearing witness to it, and is afterwards suffered to be put to the proof by the devil's plotting against it, that he might prove by the trials of tribulation, how much he had attained before in a state of peace. This man's life the adversary of the human race, evil disposed after his manner, both knew to be commended by the attestation of God, and yet asked for to prove it. And when he could not succeed in bringing him to the ground, smitten with so many losses in his substance, so many bereavements, he set on his wife against him in the goading of mispersuasion, that at all events by the words of his own household he might ruin him, whom he could never bring down by so many torments of tidings. But whereas what by woman's aid he won against Adam first in paradise, he could not make good against this second man sitting on a dunghill, he betook himself to other appliances of tempting, that he should bring in his friends as if administering consolation, and yet stir up their feelings in bitterness of upbraiding, that him whose patience scourges had failed to subdue, at least bitter words in the midst of those scourges might succeed in overcoming. But the adversary, while laying his plots with craft, was a victim to the deceit, which he had contrived against the holy man, in

that for all the occasions of ruin that he brought upon the holy man, he supplied him with as many occasions of victory. For against torments he maintained patience, against words, wisdom, in that he at once sustained the pains of stripes with resignation, and restrained the foolishness of ill advisers with wisdom. But whereas in those very sufferings and well-instructed speeches he bears a figure of Holy Church, by his friends, as we have already often said, uttering some things right and some foolish, heretics are not unjustly represented, who in respect of this, that they are friends of the holy man, say many things right of the wicked, but in respect of this, that they bear a likeness of heretics, very often transgress in the excesses of the lips, and they smite the breast of the holy man with the darts of their words, but are tired out by their very own smiting against his indomitable spirit. So then it is our business to distinguish with exact discrimination, both what there is in their words that they think aright concerning the lost, and what that they sound that is foolish as directed against blessed Job.

Ver. 1, 2. *Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said, Unto what end will ye cast abroad words? understand first, and so let us speak.*

ii. Alleg.

2. All heretics think that in some things that are known to her Holy Church is full of pride, while some things they fancy that she does not even understand. Whence Bildad the Shuhite, as it were, asserts that blessed Job had broken out into pride, when he declares[1] that he 'casts abroad words.' But he gives a token with what pride he was himself swoln, who supposed that blessed Job spoke things that he did not understand; and whereas all heretics complain that they are despised by Holy Church in her estimate of them, it is fitly subjoined,

[1] 'fatetur' is used thus

Ver. 3. *Wherefore are we counted as beasts, and reputed as vile in your sight?*

iii.

3. It is natural to the human mind to suppose that the thing that it does is done to itself. Thus they believe themselves to be despised, who are used to despise the ways of the good; and whereas in such things as are capable of being understood by reason, the Church proves against heretics that what they make up is unreasonable, they imagine them-

Job 18, 4. Allegor. selves to be counted as 'beasts' in her view. On which supposition of their being despised, they directly break out in disdain, and are urged to abuse of that Church. Whence it is added;

Ver. 4. *Why dost thou ruin thy soul in thy fury?*

iv. 4. Heretics esteem whether a strong feeling for the rule of right, or the spiritual grace of holy preaching, not as good weight of virtue, but as the madness of fury. By which same fury they believe that 'the souls of the faithful are ruined,' in that they imagine that the life of the Church is destroyed by the very same means whereby they see she is made to kindle against themselves. It goes on;

Shall the earth be forsaken for thee?

v. 5. For they think that they themselves worship God every where, that they themselves have occupied the whole world. What is it then to say, *Shall the earth be forsaken for thee?* but what they often say to the faithful, viz. 'that if this thing which you say be true, all the earth is forsaken by God, which we ourselves already occupy from the multitude of us.' Now the holy Church universal proclaims that God cannot be truly worshipped saving within herself, asserting that all they that are without her shall never be saved. But conversely heretics, who are confident that it is possible for them to be saved even without her pale, maintain that the Divine aid is rendered to them in every place. Whence they say; *Shall the earth be forsaken for thee?* i. e. 'is it so, that whosoever is out of thee cannot be saved?' Whence it is added further;

And shall the rocks be moved out of their place?

vi. 6. Heretics call those persons 'rocks' who in their views by the sublimity of their thoughts stand out in the human race, which same they glory that they have for teachers. But when Holy Church addresses herself to the task of gathering together the different erring preachers within the bosom of the right faith, what else is this but that she 'removes the rocks from their places,' that having a right view of things, they may lie down in humility within her, who aforetime were standing stiff in their own wrong notions? But heretics altogether make against the doing of this, and withstand the 'rocks being moved out of their places' on account of her

voice, because they are averse that they, who among themselves, being lifted up in their thoughts, were embued with false doctrine, by coming to her should think what is true in a humble spirit.

7. Now it very often happens that heretics, when they see any persons within the bosom of Holy Church travailing whether with want or calamities, lift themselves up directly in the presumption of righteousness, and whatsoever they see to have happened of an adverse kind to the faithful, they suppose it is done for their iniquities, not knowing doubtless that the complexion of the present life does not in the least degree prove the worth of men's conduct. For very often both good things befal the bad, and bad ones befal the good, on the very principle that real goods are reserved for the good, and real ills for the bad, in the season of the eternal recompensing. Thus Bildad bearing a figure of heretics, who lift themselves up on the grounds of this life's good fortune, swells against the strokes of blessed Job, as if with their voice in opposition to the reproach of the righteous, and expressly he is arguing against the ungodly indeed, but how wickedly he speaks in such terms against a good man, he is not aware. Thus he added, saying,

Ver. 5. *Shall not the light of the wicked be put out, and the flame of his fire cease to shine?*

8. If he says this in describing the present life, he is mistaken; in that very often both the light of prosperity is seen in the ungodly, and the darkness of ignominy and poverty envelopes the godly. But if his discourse points to this, viz. to shew what the ungodly meet with in their end, it is said with truth, *Shall not the light of the wicked be put out, and the flame of his fire cease to shine?* Which if it might have been rightly spoken in regard to an ungodly man, ought never to have been delivered against a holy man set fast in the midst of scourges. But let us, considering well the powers of his arm in delivering sentences, reflect how strongly he hurls the darts, and let us cease to look at him whom, while so hurling them, he aims to hit, knowing surely that he strikes a stone with foiled blows. So let him say; *Shall not the light of the wicked be put out?* For even the ungodly have their 'light,' i. e. the good fortune of the present

vii.

Job 18, 6. life. But 'the light of the wicked shall be put out,' in that this present life's good fortune is speedily terminated along with life itself. Whence it is fitly added; *and the flame of his fire shall not shine.*

Moral.

9. For every ungodly man has a 'flame of his own fire,' which he kindles in his heart from the heat of temporal desires, whilst he burns now with these now with those lusts, and fans his thoughts into a bigger flame by the diverse flatteries of the world. But if a fire has no flame, it does not shine by shedding any light. And so the flame of the fire is his outward beauty or power, which comes from his burning within. For what he anxiously desires to get, he very often wins, to the heaping up of his own ruin; and whether in the power of the loftiest pitch, or in the wealth of multiplied increase, he as it were shines in external glory. But 'the flame of his fire shall not shine,' in that, in the day of his departure hence, all the fair shew without is removed, and he is consumed by his own burning within alone. And 'so the flame' is removed from the 'fire,' when his exterior glory is separated from his interior burning. Even the righteous too have a flame of their fire, but one doubtless to shine bright, in this respect, that their desires give light in good works. But the light of the wicked does not shine in the least, in that hereby, viz. that they aim at what is evil, they are forced to darkness. And hence it follows;

Ver. 6. *The light shall be dark in his tabernacle.*

viii. 10. If we very frequently take darkness for sorrow, we ought without unfairness to take light for joy. And so 'the light is dark in his tabernacle,' in that in his conscience, which he inhabits in wickedness, the joy which he had from things temporal is brought to an end. Whence too it is fitly added;

And the candle that is over him shall be put out.

For to speak in language grounded on the usage of many, [1]lucerna a 'candle' is a light in an earthen vessel, but a light in an earthen vessel, is delight in the flesh. And so 'the candle that is over him is put out,' in that when the recompensing of his wickednesses comes upon the ungodly man, carnal delight is brought to nought in his heart. Now it is well that it is not said of this candle, 'which is by him,' but

'which is over him,' in that earthly enjoyments possess the mind of the bad, and so swallow it up in delight, that they are 'over' it, and not 'by' it. But the righteous even when they have the good fortune of the present life, are taught to force it to bow beneath them, that this, viz. that they are made glad in themselves with good things, they may get above by the counsel of a steadied mind, and surmount by the control of virtue. And so 'the candle' of the wicked man, 'which is over him, is put out,' in that his joy is quickly brought to an end, which possessed him wholly in this life, and the man, who now wickedly lets himself out at large in pleasures, punishment hereafter closely encompasses round about in woe. Whence it is yet further added;

Ver. 7. *The steps of his strength shall be straitened.*

11. For now as it were he puts forth 'the steps of his strength,' as often as he executes the violent acts of his power. But 'the steps of his strength shall be straitened,' in that the resources of his wickedness, which he now displays in his own gratification, punishment hereafter binds fast. It goes on; ix.

And his own counsel shall cast him down.

12. Every bad man makes it his counsel now to aim at present things, to abandon the things of eternity, to do what is unjust, to sneer at what is just; but when the Judge of the just and unjust shall come, every ungodly person is 'cast down by his counsel,' in that for this that he chose to go after here with bad intent, he is drowned in the darkness of eternal woe. For that man whom temporal glory uplifts here, punishment without end there sinks down. He who here revels in self-gratification, is there tortured with everlasting vengeance. And it often happens that the very prosperity of this life, which is so eagerly hankered after by the ungodly, so clogs their steps, that even when they have the mind to return to good works, they are scarcely able: in that they have not the power to do what is right, while they fear to displease the lovers of this world. Whence it is brought to pass, that through that glory which the ungodly man derives from sin, his sins are yet further doubled and redoubled. Which Bildad rightly sets forth, when he adds; x.

Job 18, 8. 9. [1] *maculis*

Ver. 8. *For he hath put his own foot into the net, and he walketh in the*[1] *meshes of it.*

xi. Moral.

13. He, who 'puts his feet into a net,' cannot get them out, when he has a mind; so he that lets himself down into habits of sin, cannot rise up the moment he wishes it; and he 'that walketh in the meshes of a net,' entangles his steps in walking, and when he tries to extricate himself to walk, he is tied and bound that he cannot. 'For it very often happens that a man, beguiled by the delightfulness of this world, reaches after the gloriousness of the honour thereof, that he attains to the effecting of his desires, and rejoices to have attained the object which he sought after; but seeing that the good things of this world, when not possessed, are objects of love, and very often, when possessed, grow worthless, he learns by the act of obtaining how worthless that is which he sought after. Whence being brought back to himself, he looks out how without sin to get quit of that which he sees himself to have gotten with sin; but the very same dignity which entangled him, holds him fast, and he cannot without further sins flee from thence, whereunto he came not without sin. And so he has 'put his feet into the net, and walketh in the meshes thereof,' in that when he strives to get quit, he then sees in a true light with what hard knots he is held bound. For we do not even know of our binding in a true sense, save when in striving to get free, we as it were try to lift our feet. And hence he makes known this same binding, by adding,

Ver. 9. *The gin shall take him by the heel;*

in that the end shall be made fast in sin. And because the enemy of mankind, when he binds up in sin the life of each individual, eagerly pants after his death, it is rightly added;

And thirst shall burn furiously against him.

xii.

14. For our old enemy, when he ensnares the life in sin, thirsts that he may drink the death of the sinner. Which however may also be understood in another sense. For the evil mind when it sees that it has been brought into sin, seeks with a certain superficialness of thought to escape out of the snares of sin; but fearing either the threats or re-

proaches of men, it chooses rather to die for ever, than to undergo a little of adversity for a season, whence it abandons itself wholly to evil ways, in which it perceives itself to be already once bound. And so he whose life is bound fast in sin even to the end, has his 'heel held by the gin.' But forasmuch as in the same degree that he minds that he is tied and bound with evil habits, he is in despair of his return, by that very despairing he henceforth kindles more fiercely to the lusts of this world, the heat of desire arises within him, and the mind having been ensnared by previous sins, is inflamed to even worse transgressions. And hence it is added; *And thirst shall burn furiously against him.* For in his mind there is a 'thirst that burns out against him,' in that in proportion as he is used to do wicked things, he is the more vehemently on fire to drink down evil. Since for the ungodly man to 'thirst' is to lust after the good things of this world. And hence our Redeemer cures the man with the dropsy before the Pharisee's house, and when he was arguing against avarice, it is written, *And the Pharisees also who were covetous heard all things; and they derided Him.* What does it mean then that the man with the dropsy is cured before the house of the Pharisee, but that by the sickness of one man's body the sickness of heart in another is represented? For one sick of a dropsy, the more he drinks, thirsts the more, and every covetous person redoubles his thirst by drinking, in that when he has got the things he desires, he pants the more in desiring others. For he that by getting is made to long for more, has his thirst increased by drinking. It goes on;

Book XIV.

Luke 16, 14.

Ver. 10. *His snare is buried in the earth, and his trap upon the way.*

15. His 'snare is buried in the earth,' when sin is hidden under earthly interests. For our enemy in executing his plots shews to the human mind something to long after in earthly gain, and hides the snare of sin, that it may bind his soul tight, so that he should see indeed what he might set his heart on, and yet never see in what a snare of sin he is putting his foot. Now a trap[1] has its name from entrapping. And 'a trap is' then 'placed' by our old enemy 'upon the way,' when in the course of this world's practice, which the

xiii.

[1] decipula

Job 18, 11. Moral. mind is bent to follow, the snare of sin is prepared, which same would not so easily entrap, if it were possible to be seen. For a trap is so set, that, while the meat is displayed, it is not itself seen by the passers by. For like to meat in a trap is gain with sin, and the prosperity of this world with wickedness; and so when gain is sought after by one with a covetous view, it is as if the trap which is not seen laid hold of the foot of the mind. Thus there are often set before the mind along with sin, honours, riches, health, and temporal life, which, while the weak mind sees like food, and does not see the trap, by the meat, which on seeing it longs after, it is caught fast in the sin, which is not seen. For there are kinds of tempers which border upon certain bad qualities. Thus harsh tempers are usually found to be united either to cruelty or to pride; but tempers that are soft, and joyous beyond what is becoming, are sometimes allied to lust and dissoluteness. Therefore the enemy of mankind surveys the tempers of each individual, to see what bad quality they are allied to, and he sets those objects before the face, which he sees the mind is most readily inclined to, so that to the soft and joyous tempers he often proposes dissoluteness, and sometimes vainglory, but to harsh dispositions he proposes pride or cruelty, and so there he sets a trap, where he sees the path of the mind to be, in that he there introduces peril by deception, where he has found that there is the 'way' of a kindred turn of thought. And, whereas all that the bad man does, he fears to undergo too, and reckons that to be doing by all others toward himself, which he himself prepares for all others, whom he is able, it rightly follows;

Ver. 11. *Terrors shall make him afraid on every side.*

xiv. 16. For he imagines all men to be such toward himself, as he himself strives to be towards all. And what effect these same terrors have in his conduct, is brought in, when it is said;

And shall entangle his feet.

For if 'the feet be entangled,' they cannot have free steps, and are not able to accomplish any journey; in that their own entanglements hold them fast. Therefore bad desires force into vilest practice, and vilest practice holds fast in terror; which same terror entangles the feet, that they should have no

power to step out into right practice. And it often happens that a person for this reason fears to be good, that he may not himself suffer that at the hands of the wicked, which he remembers himself to have done to the good; and whereas he dreads to undergo that thing which he has himself done, on every side affrighted, on every side full of misgiving, he as it were has his feet entangled, who is ensnared by fear; he is able to do nothing freely; in that he has in a manner lost his going in good practice by the same act, whereby he stepped out of the line into the evil which he set his heart on. It goes on; Book XIV.

Ver. 12. *Let his strength be hungerbitten, and starvation invade his ribs.*

17. After the manner of Holy Scripture, he has the appearance of wishing that which he foresees will be, not surely in the spirit of one uttering curses, but of one pronouncing prophecies. Thus every man, in that he consists of soul and flesh, is as it were made up of strength and weakness. For by virtue of that part, by which he was created a reasoning spirit, he is not improperly called ' strong,' but in respect of that, by which he is of a fleshly substance, he is weak. And so ' the strength' of man is the reasoning soul, which is able to resist by reason the tendencies to evil that assail it. And hence it is said again by blessed Job, *Thou hast strengthened him for a while, that he might pass through for evermore.* Since from a reasoning soul man derives it, that he should live for evermore. And so this wicked man's ' strength is hungerbitten,' in that his soul is not fed by any refreshment of the interior food. Of which same hunger God saith by the Prophet; *I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the word of the Lord.* XV. Job 14, 20. Amos 8, 11.

18. And it is well added, *And starvation invade his ribs.* For the ribs lace in the bowels, that lying out of sight within they should be fortified by their solidity. And so the ' ribs' of every one are the senses[1] of the mind, which fence the hidden thoughts. Therefore ' starvation invades the ribs,' when all spiritual refreshment being removed, the senses of the mind fail, and cannot either rule or guard their thoughts. ' Starvation invades the ribs' of the wicked man, in that the interior hunger debilitates the senses of the mind, that they may not

[1] Vide b. xi. c. 45. note.

Job 18, 13. Moral. rule their thoughts at all. For when the senses of the mind are dulled, the thoughts issue forth to things without, and, as it were, the ribs being weak, the bowels which might have lain in secret in a sound state, are poured forth without. Hence it comes that when the thoughts are spread abroad without, the mind being deceived goes after the image of exterior glory, and is pleased with nothing save what it beholds beautiful without; against whom the words yet further subjoined are fitly directed;

Ver. 13. *Let it devour the beauty of his skin; and let the firstborn death consume his arms.*

xvi. 19. 'The beauty of his skin' is temporal glory, which whereas it is coveted as an object without us, is retained as a beauty on the skin. But by the title of 'arms' works are not unfitly set forth, in that the work of the body is done by the arms. And what is death but sin, which kills the soul Rev. 20, 6. to the interior life? Whence it is written; *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection,* in that he shall hereafter rise again joyfully in the flesh, who whilst set in this life has risen again from the death of his soul. If then sin is death, 'the firstborn death' may not unsuitably Eccles. 10, 13. be taken for pride; in that it is written, *Pride is the beginning of all sin.* And so 'the beauty of his skin and his arms the firstborn death devoureth,' in that the glory or the practice of the bad man is overthrown by pride. For he might have been glorious even in this life without sin, if he had not been proud. He might in the judgment of His Creator have been commended for some works, if before His eyes pride had not overturned those very works. Thus we often see rich people, who might have had wealth and glory without guilt, if they would have had them with humility. But they are uplifted by possessions, they are flushed with honours, they disdain the rest of the world, and place their life's whole hope and trust in the mere abundance of good Luke 12, 19. things alone. Hence a certain rich man said, *Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.* Which thoughts of their hearts when the Judge above beholds, He plucks them away for this very confidence of theirs by itself. Hence in this place too it is fitly added;

Ver. 14. *Let his confidence be rooted out of his tabernacle, and let death as a king trample on him.*

xvii. 20. In this place by the title of 'death' we have denoted the enemy of the human race himself, who brought in death, who is set forth by a particular minister of his, of whom it is said to John, *And his name was Death.* And so this 'death,' in the day of departure hence, 'tramples upon the wicked man as a king,' in that him, whom he before deceived by soft persuasions, at the last he carries off to punishment in bonds of violence, and forces him down the more cruelly, in proportion as he ties him the stronger in bad deeds. And here too while he possesses the heart of the lost sinner, he 'tramples' upon it, in that as often as he pressed it with feelings of delight, he as it were set upon it the feet of his tyrannical dominion.

Rev. 6, 8.

21. But if by the title of 'death,' we are to understand not the devil explicitly, but sin, in consequence of which the lost meet with the doom to be dragged to death, then indeed such 'death tramples on the mind like a king,' when it possesses the same making no resistance. For temptation to sin cannot be away from man whilst set in this life. But it is one thing to resist sin tempting us, and another to be enthralled by it tyrannizing over us. And so the wicked man, because he is not taught to resist the persuasions of sin, and is not afraid to be subdued to its dominion, has it rightly said of him, *Death as a king shall trample on him.* For it was the reign of this death that Paul was keeping off from the hearts of his disciples, when he said, *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body.* Since he does not say, 'let it not be,' but, *let it not reign*, in that it cannot help but be, but *reign* it may not, in the hearts of the good. And so whereas, when a sin strikes the heart of the bad man, it does not find it resist, but bows it under its dominion, let it rightly be said, *Let his confidence be rooted out of his tabernacle, and let death as a king trample on him.* And so 'his confidence is rooted out of the earth,' when the bad man, who in this life had provided for himself many goods after his mind, is brought to nought by death in an instant. And 'death as a king tramples on him,' in that he is either pressed upon here by evil habits, or at the time

Rom. 6, 12.

Job 18, 14. of his death, hereby, viz. that he is carried off to punishment, he is brought under to the power of the devil. Which is thus done in the minds of the wicked on this account; because, even when the opportunity of committing sin is lacking, the suggestions of the desire are not in the least lacking to their minds. And whereas they do always follow the devil in practice, yet do they doubly bind themselves fast to him in thought. And so there is first sin in thought, and afterwards in act. Whence it is said to the daughter of Babylon, *Come down and sit in the dust, O Virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the earth.* For whereas dust is always earth, earth is not always dust. What then are we to understand by dust but thoughts, which, while they perseveringly and silently fly up in the mind, blind its eyes? And what is denoted by 'the earth,' but an earthly way of acting? And whereas the mind of the lost sinner is first cast down to imagine wicked things, and afterwards to do them, to the daughter of Babylon, who came down from the judgment of interior uprightness, it is rightly said in a wounding sentence, that first she should 'sit in the dust,' and afterwards 'in the earth,' in that except she had lowered herself in thought, she would never have settled fast in bad practice. It goes on;

Moral.

Is. 47, 1.

Let his fellows dwell in his tabernacle, because he is not.

xviii. 22. i. e. In his mind apostate angels shall have their haunt by vilest thoughts, they being 'his fellows,' who for this reason no longer 'is,' because he has departed from the Supreme Essence, and for this is, by a daily augmented declension, as it were tending 'not to be,' in that he has once fallen from Him Who truly is; who moreover is rightly said 'not to be,' in that he has lost well-being, though he has not lost natural being. Still, yet further setting forth these thoughts of the bad man with more minuteness, he subjoins, saying,

Let brimstone be scattered upon his habitation.

xix. 23. What is 'brimstone' but the fuel of fire, which, however, so cherishes the fire, that it sends out the very foulest stench. What then do we understand by 'brimstone,' but carnal sin, which, while it fills the mind with wicked thoughts like a kind of ill savours, is kindling everlasting fires for it; and whilst it spreads the cloud of its stench in the lost soul,

it is as it were providing against it fuel for the flames to come after. For that the ill savour of the flesh is understood by brimstone, the mere history of Holy Writ by itself bears record, which relates that the Lord 'rained down fire and brimstone upon Sodom.' Who, when He had determined to punish her carnal wickednesses, by the very character of the punishment marked out the stain of her guilt: since 'brimstone' hath stench, and fire burning; and so, forasmuch as they had been kindled to bad desires in the ill savour of the flesh, it was meet that they should perish by fire and brimstone combined; that by their just punishment they might be taught what they had done in unjust desire. And so this 'sulphur is scattered upon the habitation' of the wicked man, as often as the corrupt indulgence of the flesh exercises dominion within him; and whereas bad thoughts unceasingly occupy him, and forbid his bringing forth the fruit of good practice, it is rightly added; Book XIV. Gen. 19, 24.

Ver. 16. *Let his roots be dried up beneath, and above let his crop be spoiled.*

24. For what do we understand by the title of 'roots,' which are set out of sight, and bring forth a shoot into open view, but the thoughts, which, while they are not seen in the heart, produce visible works? And hence by the title of a 'crop' there is denoted the same visible practice, which is thus produced from a hidden root. And whereas every bad man first dries up in the imaginings of temptation and afterwards dies off from good deeds, it is rightly said by Bildad, *Let his roots be dried up beneath, and above let his crop be spoiled*, in that, whereas the wicked man sets his thoughts in things below, and neglects to seek the delights of everlasting greenness, what is this but that he lets his 'roots be dried beneath?' Whose 'crop too is spoiled above,' in that all his practice is counted as nothing in the view of the judgment above, even if it seem good in the eyes of man. Thus the 'roots' are at the bottom, and the 'crop' above, in that we first send out good thoughts here, that we may one day deserve to receive the fruit of our good works in eternal recompensing; but every wicked person when he abandons good thoughts, and pours himself forth upon the things that are without, has 'his roots dried up below:' but 'above his crop is XX.

Job 18, 17. 18. spoiled,' in that he, who persists barren here, after this life is bidden to no rewards. It goes on;

Ver. 17. *Let his remembrance perish from the earth, and let not his name be repeated in the streets.*

xxi. Proph. 25. It is deserving of our notice, that Bildad the Shuhite so expresses himself of each one of the wicked, that his words are secretly directed against the head of all the wicked; for the head of the wicked is the devil. And he in his own person having in the last times entered into that vessel of perdition, shall be called 'Antichrist,' who will endeavour to spread his name far and wide, which same every individual now likens himself to, when, by the memorial of an earthly name, he strives to extend the gloriousness of his praise, and exults in transitory reputation. Therefore let these words be so understood of each one of the wicked, that they be referred in a particular manner to the head of the wicked himself. Therefore let him say, *Let his remembrance perish from the earth, and let not his name be repeated in the streets.* For[1] streets are called by a Greek term from width, and so Antichrist aims to settle the remembrance of himself upon earth, when he longs, if it were possible, to remain for ever in temporal glory. He delights to have 'his name celebrated in the street,' whilst he spreads the working of his wickedness far and wide. But whereas this wickedness of his is not permitted to be reared to a height for a long time, let it be said, *Let his remembrance perish from the earth, and let not his name be repeated in the street;* i. e. that he should both quickly part with the fame of his earthly power, and lose all the pleasures of his name, which he had spread far and wide in the shortlived prosperity of time. It goes on;

'platea' from πλατύς, 'broad.'

Ver. 18. *He shall drive him from light into darkness.*

xxiii. 26. He is led 'from light to darkness,' when for honour in the present life, he is condemned to eternal punishments. And hence it is more plainly added,

And translate him out of the world.

For he is 'translated out of the world,' when upon the Judge above appearing, he is taken away from this world, in which he wickedly glories; and for this, that when the end of the world breaks in upon him, he is condemned with all his followers, it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 9. *There shall neither be seed of him, nor offspring in his people, nor any remnant in his parts.*

For it is written, that the Lord Jesus *shall consume him with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy him with the brightness of His coming.* And so, then, whereas his wickedness is ended together with the settled constitution of the world, there shall be 'no offspring of him left in his people,' in that both he himself and his people along with him are equally forced to punishment; and all the wicked, who by his evil advising were born in bad courses, by the brightness of the Lord's coming are struck with eternal destruction together with that head of theirs. And there is 'no offspring of him remaining in the world,' in that the strict Judge ends the iniquities of that one simultaneously with the end of the world. Now that these words are to be understood expressly of Antichrist is shewn, when it is added; 2 Thess. 2, 8.

Ver. 20. *In his days the last shall be astonied, and horror shall seize on the first.*

27. For he will then let himself loose against the righteous with such a measure of iniquity, that even the hearts of the very Elect shall be struck with no small consternation. Whence it is written, *Insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very Elect.* Which, clearly, is said, not because the Elect shall fall, but because they shall tremble with terrible alarms. Now at that time both the latest Elect and the first Elect are described as maintaining the conflict for righteousness against him, in that both they that shall be found among the Elect at the end of the world, are destined to be laid low in the death of the flesh, and they too who proceeded from the former divisions of the world, i. e. Enoch and Elijah, shall be brought back amongst men, and shall be exposed to the savageness of his cruelty still in their mortal flesh. This one's forces let loose in such terrible power, 'the latest are astonied at, and the first do dread,' in that, though in respect of this, viz. that he is lifted up by a spirit of pride, they despise all his temporal power, yet in respect of this, that they are themselves still in mortal flesh, wherein they are liable to suffer temporal anguish, they dread the very punishments, which they bear with resolution; so that there is in them at one and the same time both constancy xxiii. Mat. 24, 24.

Job 18, 21. Prophe. derived from virtue, and alarm proceeding from the flesh; in that though they be of the number of the Elect, so that they cannot be overcome by torments, yet from this only that they are men, they fear the very torments, that they overcome. So let it be said, *In his days the last shall be astonied, and terror shall seize on the first.* In that he shall then shew forth such signs, and do things so cruel and hard hearted, as to force them to astonishment, whom he shall find at the end of the world, and to pierce with the pang of carnal death the first fathers, who are reserved for his extirpation. Therefore whereas he has described many particulars relating to all the wicked, or to the head of the wicked himself, he immediately adds with a general description,

Ver. 21. *Surely, such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him that knoweth not God.*

xxiv. Moral. 28. For he had said above; *He shall drive him from light into darkness, and translate him out of the world;* and upon subjoining his miseries, he added; *Surely, such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him that knoweth not God.* In that he who is now lifted up from not knowing God, is then brought to his own 'dwellings,' when his own wickedness plunges him into woes; and one day he finds 'darkness his place,' who, while he made himself glad here in the counterfeit light of righteousness, was occupying the place of another. For bad men in all that they do in dissimulation, are striving to possess themselves of the righteous man's name of credit, as of another's place. But they are then brought to their own place, when they are tormented with everlasting fire, as the desert of their iniquity. For here in all that they do they are ministering to their desire of winning praise, and by the semblance of good works, they are opening wider the bosom of the mind to avarice. So let the wicked man go now, and full blown with complete equipments, let him build his habitations here below, let him spread a name of glory, let him multiply estates, and delight himself in abundant stores, but when he shall be brought to everlasting punishments, then surely he shall know that 'such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him that knoweth not God.' Now Bildad said this rightly, but he did not know who it was that he

was saying it to. But the heart of a good man is seriously afflicted, when sentences are pronounced against him upon an unfair estimate. Whence blessed Job directly answered, saying; BOOK XIV.

How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words?

29. The sayings of the holy man, as we have already often said, are to be understood as spoken sometimes in his own person, sometimes in the voice of the Head, and sometimes in a figure of the Church Universal. Now the soul of the righteous is deeply distressed, when those persons launch severe sentences against the good, who have not learned to lead good lives, and by the words of the mouth claim righteousness to themselves, to which in practice they are enemies. Whence to the friends of blessed Job, who, as we have already often said, bear a type of heretics, himself rightly answers, *How long will ye vex my soul, and wear me with words?* For good men are 'worn' with the words of the wicked, when those swell out against them in words of the lips, who lie low either in a corrupt faith, or in bad habits. It goes on; XXV. HIST.

Lo, these ten times ye confound me.

30. On enumerating the successive times of the speeches of Job's friends, we learn that as yet they had spoken but five times. But for this reason, that he had five times heard rebukes from them, and five times himself replied to their rebukes, he says that he had been ten times confounded; because both herein, viz. that he had been causelessly reproached, he suffered deeply, and in this, that he uttered words of instruction to those that gave no ear, he underwent confusion. And so, while in hearing he held his peace, and in speaking was not heard, that person had trouble put upon him, who both in holding his peace submissively, and in speaking to them fruitlessly, experienced pain within his heart; and hence he says above, *What shall I do? If I speak, my grief is not assuaged; and though I forbear, it will not depart from me.* But if we make these words refer to a type of Holy Church, it is well known that it is her great delight to keep the precepts of the Ten Commandments; and the wicked 'confound her ten times,' in that by all that XXVI. ALLEG.

Jos 19, 4. Allego. they do wrong in their wicked principles, they forsake the precepts of the Ten Commandments, and cause confusion to the good as often as they set themselves against the words of God in their doings. It goes on;

And ye are not ashamed that ye oppress me.

xxvii. 31. There are some persons, whom bad principle suddenly springing up invites to the commission of wickedness, yet respect for their fellow-creatures recalls again. And very often from this, viz. that they are made ashamed outwardly, they are brought back into their own interior heart, and pass an inward judgment upon themselves; in that if they are afraid to do what is evil on man's account, how much more ought they not even to have longed after what is evil, on God's account, Who sees all things? And in the case of these persons it is brought to pass, that they correct greater evil by inferior good, i. e. interior sin by exterior shame. Again, there are some, who, when once they have brought themselves to contemn God in their hearts, despise the judgments of their fellow-creatures much more, and all the evil that they long after, they do not blush to execute boldly, which persons secret wickedness invites to the commission of sin, and outward shame holds not back; as it is said also of a certain wicked judge, *Which feared not God, neither regarded man.* Hence too it is said of certain persons sinning with shameless effrontery; *And they have declared their sin as Sodom.* Thus very often there are such persons enemies of Holy Church, persons who are not withheld from committing wicked things, either by the fear of God, or regard of man; and it is well said to these by blessed Job, *And ye are not ashamed that ye oppress me;* seeing that though it was wrong to have wished bad things, it is worse not to be ashamed of things wrongly desired. It goes on;

Luke 18, 2. Is. 3, 9.

Ver. 4. *And be it indeed that I have been ignorant, my ignorance remaineth with myself.*

xxviii. 32. Heretics have this about them, that they are swoln by the empty pretensions of their knowledge, and often turn to ridicule the simplicity of those that believe rightly, and account the life of the humble to be of no worth. On the other hand Holy Church, in all that she has really wise in her, keeps low the level of her view in humility, that she be

not puffed up by knowledge, nor be made to swell high on the seeking out of things hidden, and venture to dive into points, that are above her powers. For with more profit to herself she is anxious not to know things she is unable to fathom, rather than boldly to define things she does not know. As it is written; *It is not good to eat much honey: so he that is a searcher of majesty, shall be overwhelmed by glory.* For if the sweetness of honey be taken in greater measure than there is occasion for, from the same source whence the palate is gratified, the life of the eater is destroyed. The 'searching into majesty' is also sweet; but he, that seeks to dive into it deeper than the cognizance of human nature admits, finds the mere gloriousness thereof by itself oppress him, in that, like honey taken in excess, it bursts the sense of the searcher which is not capable of holding it. Now that is said to be 'with' us, which is for us; and on the other hand that is said not to be with us, that is against us; and so, because his own knowledge puffs out the heart of the heretic, while his perception of his own ignorance abases the faithful, let blessed Job say in his own voice, let him say also in the confession of the Church Universal, *And be it indeed that I have been ignorant, my ignorance shall be with me.* As if it were said in express words to Heretics; 'All your knowledge is not with you, since it is against you, so long as it uplifts you in foolish pride; but my ignorance is with me, because it is for me; since, whereas I do not dare to search into any thing relating to God in pride of heart, I keep myself in the truth in a spirit of humility.' And because these very same things that heretics seek to know, they apply perforce to the furtherance of self-elation only, that they may seem learned in contrast to the faithful and humble, it is rightly added;

Book XIV.

Prov. 25, 27.

But ye are set up against me.

33. But perhaps we shall consider these words more thoroughly, if we point out how they apply to the friends of blessed Job personally in a special sense. For they, when they saw the righteous man smitten, ought to have turned back into their own deepest interior, and not to have persecuted blessed Job with words of upbraiding, but to have bewailed their own case; seeing that, if he was so stricken,

xxix. Hist.

Job 19, 4. Hist. who served as he did, with what vengeance did they deserve to be smitten, who had not served like him? And it is rightly said to them, *Ye are set up against me;* as if it were said to them in plainer terms; 'Ye who ought by occasion of my being smitten to have been set up against your own selves,' this being the order of such setting up on the side of goodness, viz. that we be first set up against ourselves, and afterwards against the wicked. For he that is set up against the good, is blown out in pride. Thus we are set up against ourselves, when, reviewing our own evil deeds, we smite ourselves with the severe avenging of penance, when we do not spare ourselves at all in our sins, and are not biassed by any fond thoughts towards ourselves, who, if we first rigidly follow up our evil things in ourselves, it is likewise fair, that we should be set up against the evil in others too for their good, and that the evil which we punish in ourselves, we should subdue in others too, by charging it home to them.

34. But this sort of setting up the wicked know nothing of, because they leave themselves, and attack the good; they incline themselves towards themselves, in their secret heart, by the softness of fond flattering, and they are set up against the lives of good men by the severity of harshness, whence it is now rightly said to the friends of blessed Job swelling against him under his scourge, *Ye are set up against me:* i. e. 'Your own selves, that deserve to be rebuked, ye leave, and me ye rebuke with severe sentences.' For he that does not judge himself first, is ignorant what to judge right in another; and if perchance he did know by the hearing what to judge right, yet he is not able to judge rightly the merits of another, who has no rule of judging supplied him by the consciousness of his own innocence. Hence it is that it is said to certain persons dealing deceitfully, when they brought John 8, 7. an adulteress to receive punishment; *He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.* For they went for the punishing of others' sins, and they had left their own behind; and so they are called back to their conscience within them, that they should first correct their own faults, and then reprove those of others. It is hence that, when Judges 20. the tribe of Benjamin was deep sunk in the guilt of carnal

sin, all Israel banded together would have avenged that wickedness, yet was once and again itself smitten down in the conflict of war; but on the Lord being consulted whether they should go to take vengeance, it was commanded them. The People, that went according to the bidding of God's voice, fell both once and again, and then at length effectually smiting the sinning tribe, almost wholly extirpated it. How is it that it is first kindled to the revenge of sin, and yet afterwards itself brought down; but that those are to be chastised first themselves, by whose means the sins of others are chastised; that they may themselves now come cleansed through vengeance, who are forward to chastise the evil of others? Whence it follows that when the vengeance of God's inquest is at rest towards us, our own conscience should reprove its own self, and by its own act lift itself up against self, to sorrows of penance, neither being set up towards the good, and humble towards itself, but unbending towards itself, and bowed low towards all the good. Thus to proud men administering reproof, it is rightly said; *Ye are set up against me, and ye charge me with my reproaches.* All persons that are set up, account temporal afflictions to be a grievous reproach, and they think every individual to be the more despised by God, in proportion as they see him scourged with the rod of affliction. For they look for nothing in principles, they look for nothing in practices; but whomsoever they see to be stricken in this life, they imagine to be already condemned by God's sentence; whence it is well said on this occasion by the voice of blessed Job; Book XIV.

And ye charge me with my reproaches.

35. In that they, who knew him to be righteous before his strokes, were now judging him to be unrighteous by the mere fact of his being stricken, and hence it very often happens that Heretics, because they see persons within the bosom of Holy Church suffering affliction; (for it is written of God, *And scourgeth every son whom He receiveth;*) fancy that the sorrows of the faithful arise from nothing but sin, and themselves they for this reason conclude to be righteous, because being left in the thoughts of their evil ways, lacking the rod, they have become hardened. It proceeds; xxx. Heb. 12, 6

Job 19, 6. Ver. 6. *Know now at least that God hath afflicted me with no just judgment.*

xxxi. Hist. 36. O, how hard does the voice of the righteous man sound, suffering under the infliction of the rod! which same, however, not pride, but grief gave vent to! Now he is not righteous, who gives up righteousness under sorrow; and blessed Job, because he had a meek spirit, did not sin even by a hard word. For, if we say that he did err by this voice, we make out that the devil accomplished what he

Job 2, 5. purposed, when he said, *Touch his bone and his flesh, and see if he have not blessed Thee to Thy face.* Therefore a serious question arises; for if he did not sin in that he says, *Know now at least that God has not afflicted me with a just judgment;* we agree to God's having done something unjustly, which it is profane to say; but if he did sin, then the devil made appear concerning him the thing that he promised. And so it must be asserted both that God acted rightly in His dealings with blessed Job, and yet that blessed Job herein, viz. that he says that he 'was not afflicted by a just judgment of God,' did not speak an untruth, and that our old enemy in respect of that which he promised of sin in the blessed man did speak an untruth. For sometimes the words of the good are for this reason supposed wrong, because they are not ever considered in their interior signification. Thus blessed Job had turned his eyes to his own life, and he estimated the strokes which he was undergoing, and saw that it was not just that upon such a life such strokes should be dealt. And when he says that he was not afflicted by a just judgment, he spoke that with unreserved voice, which God in His own secresy

v. 3. had said concerning him to his adversary, *thou movedst Me against him, to afflict him without cause.* For what God expresses, that He 'had afflicted blessed Job without cause,' this blessed Job asserts again in the words that he was not 'afflicted of the Lord by a just judgment?' Wherein then did he sin, who was in nothing at odds with the sentence of his Maker?

37. But perhaps some one will say, that for us to speak that good concerning ourselves, which the Judge may have said in secret concerning us, cannot be done without sin.

For he whom the Judge praises, it cannot be doubted, is justly praiseworthy; but if he in his own person praises himself, his righteousness is henceforth supposed to be no longer deserving of praise; and this is said rightly, if what the just Judge delivers in impartial sentence, the person in question should venture to say afterwards concerning himself in pride of heart. For if he himself too continuing in a humble frame, when the occasion or his grief brings it out, has uttered good that is true in his own praise, he has not departed from the line of righteousness, in so far as he was not at all at variance with truth.

38. Whence Paul the Apostle also related many brave things of himself for the edification of his disciples, but he did not commit sin by relating these things, in that both by an undeniable attestation, and a humble mind, he did not depart from the pathway of truth; and so let blessed Job, conscious of his own life being just, say that he is not afflicted by a just judgment; neither yet does he sin by that voice, wherein he is not at variance with His Maker, in that he whom God 'smote without cause,' himself also asserts that he was not 'afflicted by a just judgment.' But again there arises another question, which I remember has been already solved in the beginning of this work, viz. whereas Almighty God does nothing without cause, why does He bear witness that He had afflicted blessed Job without cause? For our just Creator by those many strokes inflicted upon blessed Job did not aim to do away with evil qualities in him, but to increase his merits; and so that was just, which He did in the heightening of his good deserts; but it did not seem equitable, because it was thought to be the punishing of instances of sin. Now blessed Job believed that sins of his doing were obliterated by those scourges, not that his merits were added to, and therefore he calls it 'not a just judgment,' because he tests his life side by side with the scourges: thus, if the life and the scourges be weighed in the scales, that was not equal dealing, which blessed Job, as I have said, supposed to be done to him in the wrathfulness of severity; but if the mercifulness of the Judge be looked to, seeing that by the punishment of the just man the merits of his life are heightened, it was an equal or rather a merciful judgment:

Job 19, 6. Hist. therefore at once Job spoke what was true, so long as he balanced his life with the stroke; and God did not afflict Job with an unjust judgment, in that he heightened his merits by the stroke; and the devil did not achieve what he promised; seeing that blessed Job, amidst words which sound hard, was neither removed from a true sentence nor a humble mind. But perhaps we shall understand these words of blessed Job less well, if we are not acquainted with the sentence of the Judge; Who, when He was delivering sentence between the two parties, says to the friends of Job;

Job 42, 7. [1]ABCD 'tam.' *Ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job hath.* Who then is there so[1] foolish in mind as to own that blessed Job had been guilty in his way of speaking, when he is declared to have spoken rightly by the very voice of the Judge itself? Which same voice, indeed, if we refer to the person of Holy Church, we not unsuitably apply it to her weak members, which while, in the season of her persecution, they weigh both her merits and her scourges, forasmuch as they see that the unjust thrive, and the just perish, have no notion that this is just. Now it is well added by the voice of the blessed man,

And compassed me with his scourges.

xxxii. 39. For it is one thing to be smitten, and another thing to be 'compassed with scourges.' Thus, we are smitten with scourges, when even in our sorrows we have a consolation derived from other sources; for when affliction lies so heavy on us that the spirit can no longer take breath by consolation from any one thing; we are now no longer smitten only, but even 'compassed with scourges,' in that we are every way surrounded by the rod of affliction. Thus Paul had

2 Cor. 7, 5. been compassed with scourges, when he said, *Without were fightings, within were fears.* He had been compassed with

2 Cor. 11, 26. scourges, when he said, *In perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness,* with the other particulars, which he so enumerates, as to shew that he no where had rest. But when Holy Church is 'compassed with the scourges' of her tribulation, all the weak in her are brought down in the fall of littleness of mind, so that they now suppose themselves disregarded, in proportion as they see that they are the more

slowly heard with effect. And it is rightly added yet further likewise in a figure of them by the voice of the holy man,

Ver. 7. *Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard; I cry aloud, but there is no one to judge.*

40. Almighty God, knowing what has in it efficacy to prove our good, shuts His ears to hear the voice of persons mourning, that He may add to their advantage, that their life may be purified by punishment, that the tranquillity of rest which can no where be found here, may be sought for elsewhere. But there are some of the faithful even that know nothing of this grace of Providential ordering, in whose person too it is now said; *Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard*; *I cry aloud, but there is no one to judge;* for it is said, 'there is no one to judge,' when He veils His eyes to judge, in that beside Him 'there is not any to judge' our cause against our adversary. Nor yet is this very thing void of judgment, viz. that judgment is delayed; seeing that at the very time that blessed Job said this, both the merits of the holy man and the punishment of his adversary were increased: so then this very deferring of judgment is the act of a judge. But what God settles justly within is one thing, and what the soul bruised by scourges without seeks after is another. Whence he still further adds of that sinking under scourges, xxxiii.

Ver. 8. *He hath fenced up my way, that I cannot pass: and He hath set darkness in my paths.*

41. He saw his 'way fenced up' with strokes, when anxiously desiring to pass into a state of security, he was not able to escape the scourges, and whereas he saw himself smitten, and yet did not find in himself a life worthy of such smiting, as it were 'in the paths' of the heart he met with 'the darkness' of his own ignorance, in that he could not fathom the cause wherefore he was so scourged. And this is not unfitly applied to the weak members of Holy Church too, when from this which they remember to have done wickedly, they are made backward in good practice as well, and, frightened by their own weakness, do not venture to attempt strong acts of goodness to match them. For they fear to begin great acts of goodness, who call to mind that they are infirm in their ways; and whereas they very often xxxiv.

Job 19, 9. Allegor. do not know the very good, which they should choose, they, as it were, shrink from the 'darkness placed in their paths.' For the mind often becomes so doubtful of its own doings, as not to know at all which is the virtue and which the fault. Thus he 'finds darkness in his path,' who in those things which he desires to do, is ignorant what he ought to choose. Therefore seeing that there is sin often from infirmity, and sometimes from ignorance, it is said in the person of the members that go weakly, *He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass.* While in the person of those who see not clear as to the very good work itself which they should choose, it is added; *and He hath set darkness in my paths.* For it is punishment of sin, to see the good which we ought to do, and yet not to have the power to fulfil it; and again it is in still worse punishment of sin, not even to see what we ought to do; and hence against both of these it is said Ps. 27, 1. by the voice of the Psalmist, *The Lord is my Light and my Salvation; whom then shall I fear?* For against the darkness of ignorance the Lord is a 'Light;' against weakness 'Salvation,' whilst He both shews what ought to be desired for the doing it, and supplies the powers, that what He shews may be fulfilled. It goes on;

Ver. 9. *He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head.*

xxxv. 42. That all this suits the person of the blessed man set in the midst of tribulation, there can be no doubt; but, since the words of the historical account are plain, they do not require explaining after the letter, therefore they have to be traced out in their mystical senses. Thus he says, *He hath stripped me of my glory.* For the glory of each individual is his righteousness. Now just as a garment protects from the cold, so does righteousness defend from death; hence righteousness is not improperly likened to a garment, where Ps. 132, 9. it is said by the Prophet; *Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness.* But seeing that in the season of her tribulation this garment of righteousness, which covers her in the sight of God, is lost to Holy Church in her members that go weakly, let it be rightly said; *He hath stripped me of my glory,* i. e. righteousness has been taken away from the weak, whereas it could never possibly have been taken away from

them, if it had been infixed in them from the ground of the heart, but for this reason it was possible to be taken away from them, because it was attached to them outwardly, like a garment. Wherein the question offers itself, how they could be called members of Holy Church, who were capable of losing the righteousness which they seemed to maintain. But it is necessary for us to know, that very often righteousness is lost for a while by her weakly members, but when they are afterwards brought back to penitence in the acknowledgment of their fault, they attach themselves to that very righteousness which they had lost more strongly than was supposed credible. And it is yet further added thereby, *and taken the crown from my head.* As the head is the first part of the body, so the leading part of the interior man is the mind. Now the crown is the reward of victory, which is set from Above, in order that he that has contended should be rewarded; and so because many persons, under the pressure of adversities, do not hold out in the contest, in these Holy Church as it were 'loses a crown from her head:' for 'a crown on the head' is the reward from Above in the mind; there are a great many who whilst they are pressed with adversities, neglect to take thought of the rewards above, and cannot reach to the completion of victory; in such, then, 'the crown is taken from the head,' in that the heavenly and spiritual reward is taken away from the aim of the mind, that they should henceforth go after the externally peaceful, nor look out for the eternal rewards, which they used to have at heart.

43. Or otherwise, 'the head' of the faithful is not inappropriately taken to mean the priests, in that they are the first part of the Lord's members; and hence it is expressed by the Prophet, that 'the head and the tail' are rooted out, in which same place both by the title of the 'head' we have the priests denoted, and by the designation of the 'tail' the reprobate prophet. Therefore 'the crown is taken from the head,' when even they abandon the heavenly rewards, who seemed to have the lead in this body of the Church; and it generally happens that, when the leaders fall, the army, that followed, is the wider worsted; and hence directly after

Job 19, 10. 11. Allegg. the ills to the greater ones, going on about the manifold undoing of the Church, he added;

Ver. 10. *He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone; and He hath removed mine hope like as with a tree torn away.*

xxxvi. 44. The Church is, as it were, 'destroyed on every side,' and undone in her weak members, when those very ones that seemed strong, are brought to ruin; when 'the crown is taken away from the head,' i. e. when the rewards of eternity are neglected even by those set at the head; and it is well added concerning weak ones falling, *And mine hope hath He removed like as with a tree torn away;* for a tree is pushed by the wind that it falls, and with him whom threats so terrify, as to make him go headlong into unrighteousness, what else is it, but that a tree met with a blast of the wind, and lost the standing of its uprightness? For he has, as it were, lost hope by the wind, who, subdued by the threats and persuasions of the wicked, has parted with those eternal rewards, which he looked forward to; and because it very often happens that a person, from fear of punishment, gives over righteousness, it is brought to pass by God's decreeing it, that even in giving up righteousness he does not get quit of the punishments, which he was afraid of, and that he who did not fear at all the destruction of the soul, meets even with the ills of the flesh, which he apprehended. Hence it is yet further added;

Ver. 11. *He hath also kindled His wrath against me, and He counteth me unto Him as one of His enemies.*

xxxvii. 45. For we have been taught by the excellent Preacher 1 Cor. 10, 13. attesting it, that 'God is faithful, Who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.' Moreover the Lord says by the Prophet, *For I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with a cruel chastisement.* Jer. 30, 14. He then that is so stricken that his powers are overcome by that striking, the Lord no longer now smites him as a son in the course of discipline, but as an enemy in indignation. Thus when the strokes exceed the power of our patience, it is very much to be feared, lest, our sins

demanding it, we are now no longer stricken as sons by a Father, but as enemies by the Lord; and whereas it very often comes to pass that evil spirits too press home many things to the hearts of the afflicted, and amidst the scourges which strike them outwardly, infuse bad thoughts into their hearts, after the wrath of the Lord it is rightly added; BOOK XIV.

Ver. 12. *His robbers come together, and make themselves a way through me.*

46. For 'his robbers' are evil spirits, who busy themselves in hunting out the deaths of men; and these 'make themselves a way' in the hearts of the afflicted, when, amidst the adversities that are undergone outwardly, they do not cease to infuse bad thoughts likewise; of whom it is yet further added; XXXVIII.

And encamp round about my tabernacle.

For they 'encamp round about our tabernacle,' when they encircle the mind on every side with their temptings; which by most wicked prompting they persuade one while to mourn for things temporal, at another time to despair of things eternal, now to go headlong into impatience, and to cast words of blasphemy against God. Yet these words, as we have already said before, agree with blessed Job even taken historically; who, whilst he heaped before his eyes the ills he was enduring, judged himself to be not like a son that must be corrected, but as an enemy stricken with affliction. Through whom even 'His robbers made themselves a way,' in that the evil spirits obtained against him the leave to smite. 'Round about whose tabernacle they encamped,' in that after his substance and his children were taken away, they bruised his whole body too with wounds. But it is very extraordinary, why, when he spoke of the 'robbers,' he added *His*, clearly with a view to shew that these same robbers belonged to God; on which point, if we make a distinction between the power and the will of evil spirits, it is made evident, why they are called 'God's robbers;' for evil spirits incessantly pant to do us mischief; but while they have a bad will derived from themselves, they have not the power of doing mischief, except the Supreme Will vouchsafes them permission; and while of themselves indeed they long to hurt us unjustly, yet by HIST.

Job. 19, 13—15. Almighty God they are not suffered to hurt any one saving justly; and so whereas the will is unjust in them and the power just, they are at once called 'robbers,' and 'God's robbers,' that it should come from themselves, that they aim to bring down evil things unjustly, and from God that the things so desired they do not consummate saving justly; but because, as we have often said already, the holy man set in the midst of the pain of punishment, one while speaks in his own accents, at another time in the accents of the Church, at another time of our Redeemer, and very frequently so describes his own circumstances, that in a figure he delivers those that belong to the Holy Church and to our Redeemer, concern for historical fact being for a little space put aside, let us shew in these things, which he subjoins, how he accords with the accents of our Redeemer. It goes on;

Allegory. Ver. 13, 14. *He hath put my brethren far from me: and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me. My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me.*

xxxix. 47. We shall shew this the better, if we bring forward the John 1, 11. testimony of John, who says, *He came unto His own, and His own received Him not;* for His 'brethren were put far from Him,' and His 'acquaintance were estranged' from Him, Whom the Hebrews that held the Law were taught to prophesy, and never knew to acknowledge when present; whence it is rightly said, *My kinsfolk have failed me, and my familiar friends have forgotten me.* For the Jews, 'kinsfolk' in the flesh, 'acquaintance' by the teaching of the Law, as it were forgot Him, Whom they had foretold, in that Him they both sung of in the words of the Law, as destined to be made Incarnate, and when made Incarnate denied Him by the words of unbelief. It proceeds;

Ver. 15. *They that dwell in my house, and my maids, count me for a stranger.*

xl. 48. The inmates of God's house were the Priests, whose [1] origo race[1] once set apart in the service of God, was henceforth by office continued in that state. But the 'maids' are not improperly taken for the souls of the Levites, servants to the hidden parts of the tabernacle as it were by a more familiar service to the interior of the bedchamber. Therefore let him say of the Priests, serving with sedulous care, let him

say of the Levites attending on the interior of the house of God. *They that dwell in my house, and my maids, have counted me for a stranger;* in that the Incarnate Lord, Whom they had for long foretold in the words of the Law, they refused to acknowledge and to reverence. And he yet more plainly shews that He was not known by their wicked will, when he adds;

And I was as it were an alien in their sight.

xli. 49. For our Redeemer whereas He was not recognised by the Synagogue, was rendered 'as it were an alien' in His own house. Which the Prophet plainly witnesses, saying, *Wherefore shalt thou be as a settler in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry?* For whereas[8] He was not heard as the Lord, He was taken not as the owner but for 'a settler of the land;' and He only 'turned aside to tarry as a wayfaring man,' in that He carried off but few out of Judæa, and going on to the calling of the Gentiles finished the journey He had begun; and so 'He was an alien' in their sight, in that while they thought only of the things they could see, they were unable to perceive in the Lord the things they could not see; for whilst they contemn the flesh that was to be seen, they never reached to the unseen Majesty; therefore let it be rightly said; *And I was as it were an alien in their sight.* Concerning which people it is yet further fitly added; Jer. 14, 8.

Ver. 16. *I called my servant, and he gave me no answer.*

xlii. 50. For what was the Jewish people but a 'servant,' which never obeyed the Lord with the love of a son, but the fear of a slave? Contrariwise it is said to us by Paul, *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father.* And so this 'servant' the Lord 'called,' in that by benefits vouchsafed, as by voices given out, He strove to bring it to Himself; but it 'answered not,' in that it was indifferent to render back deeds corresponding to His gifts. For God 'calls' us, when He presents us with His gifts; and we 'answer' to this calling, when we serve Him worthily according to the benefits we have been vouchsafed; therefore because He prevented the people with so many benefits, let him say, *I called my servant*, and because even after such Rom. 8, 15.

Job 19, 17. Allegor. numberless benefits, it contemned Him, let him add; *and he gave me no answer.* It goes on;

I entreated him with my own mouth.

xliii. 51. As though he said more plainly; 'I, the Same that before My Incarnation had given it in charge so many precepts to be practised, by the mouths of the Prophets, coming to it Incarnate, entreated it with my own mouth.' And hence Matthew, when he was telling of precepts being Matt. 5, 2. delivered by Him on the Mount, says, *And He opened His mouth, and taught.* As if he said in plain speech; 'Then He opened His own mouth, Who before had opened the mouths of the Prophets;' it is hence too that it is said of Cant. 1, 2. Him by the Spouse longing for His presence, *Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth;* since for all the precepts which she learnt by His preaching, Holy Church, as it were, received so many 'kisses of his mouth.' Now it is well said, *I entreated;* in that being exhibited in the flesh, whilst He spoke the precepts of life with humility, He, as it were, besought His servant filled with pride that he would come; and hence it is fitly added;

My wife shuddered at my breath.

xliv. 52. What does the 'wife' of the Lord mean save the Synagogue, subject to Him in the Covenant of the Law with a carnal perception? Now the breath is from the flesh, and the unbelieving people understood the incarnation of the Lord in a carnal manner; in that it took Him for mere man; and so His 'wife shuddered at His breath,' in that the Synagogue was afraid to take Him for God, Whom it saw to be man; and when it heard the words from His mouth by bodily utterance, it refused to perceive in Him the mysteries of the Divine Nature, and would not believe Him to be Creator, Whom it saw to be created; and so the carnal 'wife shuddered at the breath' of the carnal body, in that being given over to carnal senses, it did not take knowledge of the mystery of the Incarnation. It goes on;

I entreated the children of mine own womb.

xlv. 53. In God, Who is not circumscribed by the figure of a body, the members of the body, i. e. the hand, the eye, the womb, are named in such a way, that by the designation of the members, the effects of His Power are represented. As

He is said to have eyes, in that He sees all things; He is described as having hands, in that He works all things. Now in the womb the offspring is conceived, which is brought forth in this life; what then are we to take the 'womb' of God for, but His counsel, wherein before time we were conceived by predestination, that being created in time we might be brought into the world? And so God, Who abides before time, 'besought the children of His womb;' in that those, whom He created with power by His Divine nature, coming Incarnate He besought with humility; but because in that same flesh, wherein He appeared, He was contemned in their estimation, it is subjoined;

Ver. 18. *The foolish too despised me.*

xlvi. 54. The wise falling away from faith in the truth, there is an addition rightly made concerning 'fools' as well; in that when the Pharisees and the Lawyers despised the Lord, the rabble of the people too followed the example of their incredulousness, which herein, that it saw Him a man, slighted the announcements of the Redeemer of the world. For often by the title of fools, are denoted those who are poor among the common people; whence too it is said by Jeremiah, *Therefore I said, perchance these are poor, and foolish ones, that know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God.* But leaving the rich and wise of the world, our Redeemer came to seek the poor and foolish, whence it is now said, as if for the heightening of grief, *The foolish despised me.* As if it were expressed in plain speech; 'Even those very persons despised Me, for whose healing I took to Me the foolishness of preaching.' As it is written, *For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.* For the 'Word' is 'the Wisdom of God,' but 'the foolishness' of this 'Wisdom,' the Flesh of the Word is called; that whereas the carnal severally could not by craft of the flesh attain to the wisdom of God, by the foolishness of preaching, i. e. by the incarnation of the Word, they might be healed. Therefore he says, *The foolish too despised me.* As if it were expressed in plain words; 'Even by those very persons I was despised, for whose sake I was not afraid to be counted foolish.' And whereas the Jewish multitude,

Jer. 5, 4.

1 Cor. 1, 21.

Job 19, 19. when it saw the miracles of our Redeemer, honoured Him for His miracles, saying, *This is the Christ;* but when it beheld the infirmities of His human nature, it disdained to account Him the Creator, saying, *Nay, but He deceiveth the people;* it is rightly subjoined;

ALLEG. John 7, 41. 12.

And when I departed from them, they spake against me.

xlvii. 55. For the Lord as it were drew near to the hearts of people, when He displayed miracles to them; and He as it were 'departed from them,' when He shewed them no signs; but they spake against the Lord so 'departing,' when they refused to yield their faith to Him thus resting from miracles; but what wonder that He met with such treatment from the common folk, when those very persons, who appeared to be teachers of the Law, who gave it out that He was to be made Incarnate in the words of Prophecy, both beheld Him made Incarnate, and yet were parted from Him by the disjoining of unbelief? Concerning whom it is added;

Ver. 19. *They that were once my counsellors abhorred me, and he whom I loved most turned away from me.*

xlviii. 56. It is plain to all people, that God does not stand in need of counsellors, Who to man's very counsellors themselves too vouchsafes the counsel of wisdom. Of whom moreover it is written, *Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counsellor?* but as when bread or clothing is bestowed on one that lacks them, the Lord bears witness that He Himself has received them; so when right counsel is given to one that is ignorant of it, He Himself receives it, of Whom that man is a member, who is so instructed; for all we, that are of the number of the faithful, are members of our Redeemer; and as He Himself is fed in our persons by the pitying of liberality, so He is Himself aided in our persons by the counselling of instruction; and so the scribes and doctors of the Law who used to instruct the people with respect to life, what else were they but 'counsellors' of the Redeemer, Who was to come? Who, nevertheless, when they beheld the Lord become Incarnate, separated numbers from faith in Him by their counsels, though before they had seemed to teach numbers by the words of the Prophets to believe the mystery of His Incarnation; and because with God he is more in His love,

Hom. xi. 34. from Is. 40, 13.

who draws the greatest number to the love of Him, it is further added of that same order of the doctors of the Law and the Pharisees; *and he whom I loved most, turned away from me.* For that very order, through the prompting of unbelief, was turned aside from faith in the truth, which before, while serving in the labours of preaching, was most beloved, which same not only to the extent of not believing the Lord, but even of persecuting Him as well, the rabble of the common people followed, and was kindled with the firebrands of cruelty to the very deed of His Passion; in which very Passion too the hearts of the disciples were troubled; whence also it is here added; Book XIV.

Ver. 20. *My bone cleaveth to my skin, through my flesh being wasted.*

57. By 'bone' we have strength, and by flesh weakness of the body denoted; therefore, whereas Christ and the Church are one person, what is signified by the 'bone' but the Lord Himself? what by the 'flesh' save the disciples, who in the hour of His Passion were weakly disposed? but by the 'skin,' which in the body remains more outward than the flesh, what is represented but those holy women, who with the view to furnish the stays of the body, served the Lord by outward offices of ministration? for when His disciples, though not yet firm, were preaching faith to the people, the flesh kept close to its bone; and when the holy women prepared the outward things that were necessary, they as it were like 'a skin' remained on the body outwards; but when it came to the hour of the Cross, exceeding great fear, caused by the persecution of the Jews, took possession of His disciples: they severally fled, the women 'stuck close,' and so, the 'flesh,' as it were, 'being consumed,' 'the bone of the Lord clave to its skin,' in that His strength, when the disciples fled in the hour of the Passion, had the women close beside it. Peter indeed stood for some time, but yet afterwards being affrighted he denied Him. John too stood, to whom at the very time of the Cross it was said, *Behold thy mother.* But he could not persevere; since it is also written concerning him[a], *And there followed Him a certain* xlix. John 19, 27. Mark 14, 51, 52.

[a] See the Life of St. John by Cave, who says, that 'the ancients' understand it of him. Theophylact takes it to mean James the brother of our Lord; but either opinion can be only a conjecture. St. John was at least amongst those who *forsook Him and fled.*

Job 19, 20. Allegor. *young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body, and the young men laid hold of him. And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked;* who although afterwards, to hear the words of his Redeemer, he returned at the hour of the Cross, yet first he was affrighted and fled; but the women are related not only not to have been afraid nor to have fled, but even to have stood fast even to the sepulchre; and so let him say, *My bone cleaveth to my skin, through the flesh being wasted;* i. e. 'they that ought to have attached themselves closer to My strength, in the season of My Passion were consumed with dread; and those whom I set to external ministrations, in My Passion I found attached themselves faithfully to Me without fear.' And here it is plainly implied that these words are delivered in mystery, in that it follows;

And the lips only are left about my teeth.

1. 58. For what do we have 'about our teeth,' but 'lips,' even if we suffer no scourges of affliction? but what is signified by 'the lips' but talk, what by 'teeth' but the holy Apostles? who are with this intention set in this body of the Church, that they may bite at the life of the carnal by correction, and break it in pieces from the hardness of its obstinacy; and hence it is said to that first of the Acts 10, 13. Apostles, as being set as a tooth in His Body, *Kill, and eat.* But because, at the time of His Passion, these 'teeth' from fear of death lost the biting of correction, lost the assurance of strength, lost the efficiency of practice of every sort, so that two of them as they walked, after His death Luke 24, 21. and resurrection, talked by the way and said, *But we trusted that it should have been he which should have redeemed Israel;* it is rightly said here, *And the lips only are left about my teeth.* They were still conversing about Him, but now they no longer at all believed in Him; and so 'the lips only remained about His teeth,' in that they had parted with the efficiency of good practice, and only retained words of converse about Him. They had lost the bite of correction, and possessed the mooting of speech. Therefore, 'the lips only were left about the teeth,' in that to talk about Him indeed they knew still, but to preach Him now, or to bite the bad ways of unbelievers, they were afraid. Therefore these particulars being finished, which he

spoke in the voice of the Head, blessed Job is brought back to his own words, saying; Book XIV. Hist.

Ver. 21. *Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me.*

59. The mind of godly men is used to have this peculiar to itself, that when it suffers unjust treatment at the hands of enemies, it is not so much moved to wrath as to prayer; that if the wickedness of those persons could be made to subside to a calm, they would choose rather to beseech than to be wroth; whence it is rightly said in this place, *Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me.* Observe, those by whom he sees that he is ever being treated with insults, he calls 'friends,' in that to godly minds the very things that seem contrary are made favourable; for any that are wicked are either converted by the sweetness of the good so as to turn back, and by this alone they are friends, viz. that they are made good, or they persevere in their wickedness, and herein also even against their will they are 'friends,' in that, if there be any transgressions of the good, by their persecutions they purge them away even unknowingly. Observe too, that with these things which are done with God in secret, the words of the blessed man openly spoken are quite of a piece. Thus he had been smitten by Satan, yet he did not ascribe his being smitten to Satan, but he calls himself 'touched by the hand of God,' as Satan himself too had said; *But put forth thine hand now and touch his bone and his flesh, and see if he bless Thee not to Thy face.* For the holy man knew that in that very thing which Satan had done towards him with an evil will, he derived his power not from himself, but from the Lord. It goes on; li. c. 2, 5.

Ver. 22. *Why do ye persecute me as God; and are filled with my flesh?*

60. It is not at variance with the style of piety that he tells that he is persecuted by God. For there is a good persecutor; as when the Lord says of Himself by the lips of the Prophet, *Him that privily slandereth his neighbour, him did I persecute.* But when any Saint is suffered to be stricken, he knows that he is undergoing persecution, sent against evil he has been guilty of, from the interior ordering. liii. Ps. 101, 5.

Job 19, 22. Hist. Now the savage minds of the persecutors, when they desire the power to smite, are inflamed against the life of the good not with the ardour of purifying, but with the firebrands of envy; and they do that indeed, which Almighty God allows to be done; in that while there is one cause with God transacted too by their agency, yet there is not one will maintained in that cause, since whilst Almighty God, in loving, is enforcing purification, the wickedness of the unjust is exercising malice in raging. This then that is said, *Why do ye persecute me as God?* he spoke with reference to the external smiting, not to the interior intention, in that though they execute that externally which God ordained to be done, yet in their doing it they do not seek that which God does, viz. that good men should be purified by means of affliction. Which too may likewise be understood in another sense also. For Almighty God chastens the evil qualities of others so much the more justly in proportion as He has no whit of evil qualities in Himself; but men when they strike others in the course of discipline, ought so to chasten the frailty of another, that they should at the same time have learnt the habit to recall their eyes to their own frailty, so as to consider from themselves how they ought to spare in smiting others, seeing that they are not unaware that they themselves too are worthy of stripes. And so it is said in this case, *Why do ye persecute me as God?* As if it were expressed in plain words; 'Ye do so afflict me on the grounds of my frailties, as if ye yourselves after the manner of God owned nought of infirmity:' whence it is to be considered, that if perchance there be persons that need sharpness of correction, hard correction is then to be used to them by us, when the hand of God ceases from using the rod; but when strokes from above are upon them, from us there is now due no longer correction but consolation, lest, while in their grief we join our reproach, we put smiting to smiting.

61. Now it is well added, *And are filled with my flesh?* The mind which hungers for the punishing of a neighbour, surely seeks to be 'filled with the flesh' of another. Moreover it is necessary to be known, that those also who feed on the slander of another's life, are as surely 'filled with the

flesh' of another. Whence it is said by Solomon; *Be not in the feastings of winebibbers; nor eat with those, who bring together flesh to eat.* For to 'bring together flesh to eat,' is, in the parlance of disparagement to tell by turns the bad qualities of neighbours; concerning whose punishment it is directly added there, *they that are given to cups, and that give a contribution, shall be consumed, and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.* They are 'given to cups' who make themselves drunk[1] with slander of another's life; but to 'give a contribution[2],' is in the same way that each individual is used to contribute provisions for his share to be eaten, so in the parlance of slander to contribute words. But 'they that are given to cups and that give a contribution shall be consumed,' in that as it is written, *Every slanderer shall be rooted out;* but 'drowsiness shall cover a man with rags,' in that his death finds him an object of contempt and empty of all good works, whom the sickly habit[3] of detraction took possession of here for the raking out the misdemeanours of another man's life. But all those hardships which blessed Job undergoes it is not meet should be let pass in silence, and that the obscurity of ignorance should cover them from man's knowledge; for so many may be edified for the preserving of patience, as they who, by grace from above replenishing them, may be made acquainted with the achievements of his patience. And hence the same blessed Job would have the strokes which he feels carried into an example, in that he immediately adds, saying;

Book XIV. Prov. 23, 20.

ib. 21.

[1] se debriant
[2] symbolum.

Ben.Ed. refers to Prov. 15, 5. perhaps Ps. 101, 5.

[3] languor

Ver. 23, 24. *O that my words were now written! O that they were graven in a book with an iron pen, and a plate of lead, or surely that they were hewed in the flint!*

liii.

62. Whereas all that blessed Job underwent, that heavy Jewish people, being instructed by the strong declaration of the Fathers, was brought to know, they were written with 'an iron pen' and 'a plate of lead;' but whereas the hard hearts of the Gentiles also were made acquainted with them, what is this but that we see them 'hewn in the flint?' And observe, that what is written on lead, by the mere softness of the metal, is quickly obliterated; but upon the flint letters may be more slowly stamped indeed, but more hardly obli-

Jos 19, 23. 24. ALLEG.

terated. Therefore it is not unsuitably that by 'the plate of lead' Judæa is represented, which at once received the precepts of God without labour, and lost them with speed; and rightly by 'the flint' the Gentile world is represented, which could with difficulty receive the words of sacred revelation to keep, but kept them when received fixedly. Now by the 'iron pen' what else is denoted save the strong sentence of God? Whence too it is said by the Prophet, *The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron on a diamond nail*[1]. The end of the body is in the nail, and a diamond is so hard a stone, that it cannot be cut with iron. Now by 'an iron pen' there is denoted a strong sentence, but by a 'diamond nail' the eternal end; so the sin of Judah is said to be written with a 'pen of iron upon a diamond nail,' in that the guilt of the Jews is reserved by the strong sentence of God for an end that is endless.

Jer. 17, 1.

[1] ungue

63. Rightly too by 'a plate of lead' we understand those, whom the load of avarice weighs down, to whom it is said by the Prophet with upbraiding, *O ye sons of men, how long heavy in heart!* For by lead, the nature whereof is of a heavy weight, the sin of avarice is in a special manner denoted, which renders the mind it has infected so heavy, that it can never be raised to aim at things on high. Hence it is written in Zechariah, *Lift up now thine eyes, and see what is this that goeth forth. And I said, What is it? And he said, This is an ephah*[2] *that goeth forth. He said moreover, This is their eye throughout all the earth. And behold there was lifted up a talent of lead, and, lo, one woman sitting in the midst of the ephah. And he said, This is wickedness; and he cast her into the midst of the ephah, and he cast the weight of lead on her face*[3]. And with reference to this vision of 'the ephah,' and 'the woman,' and 'the lead,' that he might shew more fully what he had been made to know, he yet further added going on, *Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and behold there came out two women, and a spirit was in their wings, for they had wings like the wings of a kite, and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven. Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah? And he said, To build it an house in the land of*

Zech. 5, 5—8.

[2] Lat. *amphora*

[3] or *into the mouth thereof.*

v. 9-11.

Shinar. Which testimony of the Prophet we have brought forward as a proof of the lead to no purpose, if we do not also explain it going over it again. Thus he says, *Lift up now thine eyes, and see what is this that goeth forth; and I said, What is this? And he said, It is an ephah that goeth forth.* God desiring to shew to the Prophet, by what sin above all others the human race fell away from Him, by the figure of an ephah as it were denoted the wide-opened mouth of avarice. For avarice is like an ephah, in that it keeps the mouth of the heart open and agape on the stretch[1]. And he said, *This is their eye through all the world.* We see many men of dull sense, and yet we see them sharp in bad practices, as the Prophet too testifies, who saith, *They are wise to do evil; but to do good they have no knowledge.* And so these are dull in sense, but in those things which they desire, they are urged on by the goads of avarice; and they that are blind to see good, under the incitements of rewards are quick-eyed to the doing evil things. Hence it is rightly said of this same avarice, *This is their eye in all the world. And behold there was lifted up a talent of lead.* What is 'a talent of lead' but the weight of sin from that very avarice. *And, lo, one woman sitting in the midst of the ephah.* Which same woman, lest perchance we should doubt who she was, the Angel thereupon made known; for it follows there immediately, *And he said, This is impiety; and he cast her into the midst of the ephah.* Impiety is 'cast into the midst of the ephah,' in that in avarice there is always impiety taken in. *And he cast the weight of lead on her face.* The mass of lead is cast on the woman's face, in that the impiety of avarice is borne down by the very weight of its own sin; for if it did not reach after things that are below, it would never prove impious towards God and our neighbour.

[1] 'in ambitu'

Jer. 4, 22.

64. *Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and behold there came out two women, and a spirit was in their wings.* What do we understand by these 'two women' but the two principal vices, i. e. pride and vain glory, which are without any doubt united to impiety? Which two are described as having 'a spirit in their wings;' in that they are subservient to the will of Satan in their actions; for the Prophet calls

Job 19, 23. 24. Eccles. 10, 4. Mat. 12, 43. that one 'a spirit,' concerning whom Solomon saith, *If the spirit of him that hath power rise above thee, leave not thy place;* and of whom the Lord saith in the Gospel; *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places.* 'A spirit is in their wings,' in that in whatsoever they do, pride and vain glory render obedience to the will of Satan. *And they had wings like the wings of a kite.* Now the kite is always busied in plotting against the chicken kind. So these women have 'wings like the wings of a kite,' in that surely their doings are like the devil, who is always plotting against the life of the little ones. *And they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven.* Pride and vain glory have this peculiar to them, that whosoever is infected by them, they lift up in his own conceit above the rest of his fellow creatures: at one time by pursuit of the gifts of fortune, at another time by the desire of dignities, the man whom they have once gotten captive, they, as it were, lift up into the height of honour. And he that is between the earth and the heaven, at once leaves things below, and fails altogether to attain the things on high.

65. These women, then, 'lift up the ephah between the earth and the heaven,' in that pride and vain glory so exalt the mind taken captive through greediness of honour, that looking down upon all their neighbours, men do, as it were, leave things below, and in proud boasting seek high things. But all such persons, while they give themselves up to pride, at once in imagination mount above those, with whom they are placed, and are far from ever being united to the citizens above. Thus the ephah is said to be 'lifted up between earth and heaven,' in that all covetous persons through pride and vain glory at once despise their neighbours at their side, and never lay hold of the things above, which are beyond them; and so they are carried 'between the earth and the heaven,' in that they neither keep equality of brotherhood in this lower world by charity, nor yet are able to attain the world above by setting themselves up. *And I said to the Angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah? and he said, To build it an house in the land of Shinar.* That same ephah has a 'house built it in the land of Shinar,' for 'Shinar' is rendered 'their ill savour;'

and as there is a sweet savour from virtue, as Paul bears witness, who saith; *and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place; For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ;* so reversely there is an ill savour from vice. *For covetousness is the root of all evil.* And whereas every thing evil is engendered by avarice, it is meet that the house of avarice should be erected in 'ill savour.' Moreover it is necessary to be known that 'Shinar' is a very wide valley, wherein the tower was begun to be built by men giving themselves to pride, which, when the diversity of tongues was brought to pass, came to destruction; which same tower was called Babylon, forsooth on account of that very confusion of minds and tongues: nor is it inappropriately that the 'ephah' of avarice is placed there, where 'Babylon,' i. e. 'confusion,' is building, in that whereas it is certain that from avarice and impiety all things bad have their origin, this same avarice and impiety are rightly described as dwelling in confusion.

Book XIV. 2 Cor. 2, 14. 1 Tim. 6, 10.

66. We have said these things in few words out of course, that we might shew that the weight of sin is set forth by the 'plate of lead.' Yet these very words of blessed Job are also applicable to Holy Church, who while keeping the two testaments of sacred revelation, as it were begs a second time that her words should be written, saying, *Oh! that my words were now written! Oh! that they were printed in a book!* Which same, in that she speaks with a strong sentence at one time to hearts heavy from the weight of avarice, at another time to hardened hearts, 'writes with a pen of iron upon a plate of lead,' or, surely, 'upon the flint.' Now we say with justice that blessed Job uses the accents of our Redeemer and His Church, if we find any thing that he says explicitly of that same Redeemer of us men; for how is it to be believed that he teaches us any thing connected with Him in a figure, if he does not point Him out to us in express words? But now let him disclose to us what he is sensible of concerning Him, and let him take away from us all misgivings in our thoughts. It goes on;

Ver. 25. *For I know that my Redeemer liveth.*

67. For he who does not say, 'Creator,' but 'Redeemer,' liv. expressly tells of Him, Who after He created all things,

Job 19, 25. Lit. appeared Incarnate amongst us, that He might redeem us from a state of bondage, and by His Passion set us free from death everlasting; and mark with what sure faith he makes himself secure in the power of His Divine Nature, of Whom 2 Cor. 13, 4. it is said by Paul, *For though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God.* For he says, *For I know that my Redeemer liveth.* As if he said in express terms; 'The unbelievers may know that He was scourged, mocked, struck with the palms of the hand, covered with a crown of thorns, besmeared with spittings, crucified, dead: I, with sure faith, believe Him to live after death; I confess with unreserved voice, 'that my Redeemer liveth,' Who died by the hands of wicked men.' And how, O blessed Job, through His Resurrection, thou trustest to the resurrection of thine own flesh, declare, I pray, in open speech. It goes on;

And that I shall rise at the last day from the earth.

lv. 68. That is, because the resurrection which He manifested in His own Person, He will one day bring to pass in ourselves as well; for the resurrection, which He exhibited in Himself, He pledged to us; seeing that the members follow the glory of their Head. Thus our Redeemer underwent death, that we might not fear to die; He manifested the resurrection, that we might have a sure hope that we are capable of rising again. And hence He would not have that death to be of more than three days' duration, lest if the resurrection were deferred in Him, it should be altogether despaired of in ourselves; and this is rightly said of Him by Ps. 110, 7. the Prophet; *He shall drink of the brook in the way; therefore shall he lift up the head.* For He in a manner condescended to drink of that current as it were of our suffering, not in an abiding place, but 'in the way,' in that He met death in a transitory way, i. e. for three days, and in that death which He met He did not, like ourselves, remain unto the end of the world. And so, whereas He rose again on the third day, what then is to come after in His body, i. e. in the Church, He makes appear; for He shewed in example, what He promised in reward, that as believers knew and owned that He had Himself risen again, so they might hope for the rewards of the resurrection in themselves at the end of the

world. Lo, we, through the death of the flesh, remain in the dust until the end of the world, but He on the third day budded into life from the dryness of death, that by the very renewal of His flesh by itself He might shew the power of His Divine Nature. Which is well shewn in Moses by the twelve rods placed in the Tabernacle: for when the priesthood of Aaron, who was of the tribe of Levi, was despised, and the tribe was not accounted worthy to offer up burnt-offerings, twelve rods according to the twelve tribes were ordered to be put in the Tabernacle, and, lo, the rod of Levi budded, and shewed what efficacy Aaron had in the office. By which same sign what is conveyed, but that all we who lie in the arms of death until the very end of the world, remain like the rest of the rods in a state of barrenness? But when all the rods remained in a state of dryness, the rod of Levi returned to flowering, in that the body of our Lord, i. e. our true Priest, being set in the dryness of death, burst into the flower of the Resurrection. By which same flowering Aaron is rightly known to be the Priest, in that by this glory of the Resurrection our Redeemer, Who sprung from the tribe of Judah and Levi[1], is shewn to be an Intercessor in our behalf. And so, lo! the rod of Aaron buds now after dryness, but the rods of the twelve tribes remain in a dry state, in that already indeed the body of the Lord lives after death, but our bodies are kept back from the glory of the resurrection until the end of the world. Whence he carefully introduced this same delay, by saying, *And that I shall rise at the last*[2] *day from the earth.*

Book XIV.

Num. 17, 8.

[1] Luke 1; 5, 36.

[2] novissimo.

69. Therefore we have a hope of our own resurrection, by considering the glory of our Head. But lest any one say perhaps merely in the secret thought of his heart, that it was in this way that He rose again from the dead, viz. that being God and Man in one and the same Person, the death, which He underwent in His Human Nature, He overcame by His Divine Nature, while we, who are mere men, are not able to rise from the curse of death; it happened rightly that, in the season of His resurrection, the bodies of many of the Saints arose at the same time, that both in Himself He might shew us an example, and by the resurrection of others who were like to ourselves in respect of a mere human nature, He might

Job 19, 25. Lit. give us a sure confirmation, that whereas man despaired of his obtaining what He that was God and Man had exhibited in His own Person, he might presume that that was capable of being brought to pass in his own case, which he knew to have been brought about in the case of those very persons, who he doubted not were but simple human beings.

70. But there are some who, observing that the spirit is parted from the flesh, that the flesh is turned into corruption, that its corruption is reduced to dust, that this dust is so dissolved into elementary parts that it is incapable of being seen by the eyes of man, despair of the possibility of the resurrection being brought to pass, and whilst they gaze on the dry bones, they distrust its being possible for these to be clothed with flesh, and again flushing into life; which persons, if they do not hold the resurrection of the body on the principle of obedience, ought certainly to hold it on the principle of reason. For what does the universe every day, but imitate in its elements our resurrection? Thus by the lapse of the minutes of the day the temporal light itself as it were dies, when, the shade of night coming on, that light which was beheld is withdrawn from sight, and it daily rises again as it were, when the light that was withdrawn from our eyes, upon the night being suppressed is renewed afresh. For the progress of the seasons too, we see the shrubs lose the greenness of their foliage, and cease from putting forth fruit; and on a sudden as if from dried up wood, by a kind of resurrection coming we see the leaves burst forth, the fruit grow big, and the whole tree clothed with renewed beauty; we unceasingly behold the small seeds of trees committed to the moistness of the ground, wherefrom not long afterwards we behold large trees arise, and bring forth leaves and fruit. Let us then consider the little seed of any tree whatever, which is thrown into the ground, for a tree to be produced therefrom, and let us take in, if we are capable of it, where in that exceeding littleness of the seed that most enormous tree was buried, which proceeded from it? where was the wood? where the bark? where the verdure of the foliage? where the abundance of the fruit? Was there any thing of the kind perceived in the seed, when it was thrown into the ground? And yet by the secret Artificer of all

Comp. S. Chrys. on 1 Thess. 4, 15.

things ordering all in a wonderful manner, both in the softness of the seed there lay buried the roughness of the bark, and in its tenderness there was hidden the strength of its timber, and in its dryness fertility of productiveness. What wonder, then, if that finest dust, which to our eyes is resolved into the elements, He, when He is minded, fashioneth again into the human being, Who from the finest seeds resuscitates the largest trees? And so, seeing that we have been created reasoning beings, we ought to collect the hope of our own resurrection from the mere aspect and contemplation of the objects of nature. But forasmuch as the faculty of reason was deadened in us, the grace of the Redeemer came in for an example. For our Creator came, He took death upon Him, He exhibited the Resurrection, in order that we, who would not hold the hope of the Resurrection by reason, might hold it by His succour and example; and so let blessed Job say; *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall rise at the last day from the earth.* And let any one that despairs of the possibility that the power of the Resurrection should be brought to pass in himself, blush at the words of a believing person set in the midst of the Gentile world, and let him reflect with what a weight of punishment he deserves to be stricken, if he still does not believe his own resurrection, who now knows the resurrection of the Lord which has taken place, if even he believed his own, who as yet expected the resurrection of the Lord Jesus to be brought to pass.

71. But see, I hear of the resurrection, but it is the effect of the resurrection that I am searching out. For I believe that I shall rise again, but I wish that I might hear what kind of person; since it is a thing I ought to know, whether I shall rise again perhaps in some other subtle or ethereal body, or in that body wherein I shall die. But if I shall rise again in an ethereal body, it will no longer be myself, who rise again. For how can that be a true resurrection, if there may not be true flesh? so that plain reason suggests, that if it shall not be true flesh, assuredly it will not be a true resurrection; for neither can it be rightly termed a resurrection, when it is not what fell that rises again. But in this too for us, O blessed Job, do thou remove these

Job 19, 26. Lit. clouds of misgiving, and whereas through the grace of the Holy Spirit vouchsafed thee thou hast begun to speak to us of the hope of our resurrection, shew in plain words if our flesh shall really rise again. It follows,

Ver. 26. *And I shall be again encompassed with my skin.*

lvi. 72. Whereas the 'skin' is expressly named, all doubt of a true resurrection is removed; in that our body will not, as Eutychius the Bishop of Constantinople wrote, in that gloriousness of the resurrection be impalpable, and more subtle than the wind and air: for in that gloriousness of the resurrection our body will be subtle indeed by the efficacy of a spiritual power, but palpable by the reality of its nature; whence also our Redeemer, when the disciples doubted of His resurrection, shewed them His hands and feet, and offered His bones and flesh to be touched, saying, *Handle Me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have.* And when, being placed in the city of Constantinople, I brought before Eutychius this testimony of truth from the Gospel, he said, 'For this reason the Lord did this, that He might take away all doubt of the resurrection from the hearts of the disciples.' To whom I said; 'This is a very extraordinary thing that you assert, that doubting should arise to ourselves from the same quarter, whence the hearts of the disciples were cured of doubting.' For what can be said worse than that that is made doubtful to us relating to His true flesh, whereby His disciples were restored anew to faith from all doubting? For if He is declared not to have had that, which He manifested; from the same source, from whence the faith of His disciples is confirmed, ours is destroyed. And he further added, saying, 'He had that body which He shewed a palpable body; but after the hearts of those that handled it were confirmed, all that in the Lord which was capable of being handled, was reduced into a certain subtle quality.' To which same I answered, saying; 'It is written, *Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Him.* If then there was aught in the Body which was capable of being altered after His resurrection, contrary to the truly spoken declaration of Paul, the Lord after His resurrection returned into death; and what fool even would

Luke 24, 39.

Rom. 6, 9.

venture to say this, save he that denies the true resurrection of His flesh?' Then he objected to me, saying, 'Whereas it is written; *Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God*, by what means is it to be supposed that the flesh truly rises again?' To whom I say; 'In Holy Writ flesh is named in one way according to nature, and in another way according to sin or corruption.' For there is flesh according to nature, as where it is written, *This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.* And, *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.* But there is flesh according to sin, as where it is written, *My Spirit shall not always abide in those men, for that they are flesh.* And as the Psalmist saith; *For He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.* Whence too Paul said to the disciples; *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit.* For it was not that these persons were not in the flesh, to whom he was sending letters, but for that they had subdued the motions of carnal passions, henceforth, free through the efficacy of the Spirit, they 'were not in the flesh.' Therefore in respect to what Paul says, that *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*, he would have flesh to be understood as applied to sin, not flesh as applied to nature. Hence directly afterwards that he was speaking of flesh after sin he makes plain, by adding; *Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.* Therefore in that glory of the heavenly kingdom there will be flesh according to nature, but not flesh according to the desire of the passions; in that the sting of death being overcome, it will reign in eternal incorruptibility.'

Book XIV.

1 Cor. 15, 50.

Gen. 2, 23. John 1, 14.

Gen. 6, 3.

Ps. 78, 39.

Rom. 8, 9.

73. To which words the same Eutychius directly answered that he assented, yet still he denied that the body could rise again a palpable body. Who in the treatise too which he had written concerning the resurrection, had put in the testimony of the Apostle Paul, when he says; *That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain.* Being eager to shew this, that the flesh will either be impalpable *, or will not be itself identically, seeing

1 Cor. 15, 36. 37.

* Nearly all MSS. read, 'palpabilis,' which, if right, must come under the following negative.

Job 19, 26. Lit. that the holy Apostle, when treating of the glory of the resurrection, says that 'it was not sown the body that it shall be.' But the answer to this is soon made. For the Apostle Paul, when he says, *Thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain*, is telling us of what we see; viz. that the grain, which is sown without a stalk or leaves, springs up with a stalk and leaves; so that he, in heightening the glory of the resurrection, did not say that what it was is wanting to it, but that what it was not is present: but this man, whereas he denies the real body to rise again, does not say that what was wanting is there, but that what it was is wanting.

74. Upon this, then, we being led on in long disputing on this point, we began to recoil from one another with the greatest animosity, when the Emperor Tiberius Constantine, of religious memory, bringing myself and him to a private audience, learnt what dispute was being carried on between us, and weighing the statement of both sides, and by his own allegations as well disproving that same book which he had written concerning the resurrection, determined that it ought to be consumed in the flames. Upon our leaving whom, I was seized with a grievous sickness, while to that same Eutychius sickness and death shortly followed. And when he was dead, because there was well nigh no one who followed his statements, I held back from prosecuting what I had commenced, lest I should seem to be darting words at his ashes, but while he was still alive, and I sick of violent fever, if any of my acquaintance went to him for the sake of greeting him, as I learnt from their relation, he used to take hold on the skin of his hand before their eyes, saying, 'I confess that we shall all rise again in this flesh;' which as they themselves avowed he was before wont altogether to deny.

75. But let us, laying aside these considerations, minutely search out in the words of blessed Job, if there will be a true resurrection, and the true body in that resurrection; for, lo, we are no longer able to doubt of the hope of the resurrection, in that he says, *And that I shall rise at the last day from the earth*. Moreover he has removed all doubting of the true renewal of the body, in that he says, *And I shall be again encompassed with my skin*. And he still further

adds, with the view of removing the misgivings of our thought; Book XIV.

And in my flesh shall I see God.

76. Mark, he owns the resurrection, 'the skin,' 'the flesh,' in explicit words. What is there left then, by which our mind should have occasion to doubt? If this holy man then before the fact of the Lord's resurrection, believed in the flesh being destined to be brought back to its entire state, what will be the guilt of our doubting, if the true resurrection of the flesh not even after the proof of our Redeemer obtains credit? For if after the resurrection there will not be a palpable body, surely another person rises again than dies: which is profane to say; viz. to believe that it is I who die, and another that doth rise again[1]. Wherefore I entreat thee, blessed Job, add how thou art minded, and remove from us all ground of scruple on this point. It follows; lvii.

[1] ABCD, 'another shall rise.'

Ver. 27. *Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.*

77. For if, as certain votaries of false opinions believe, after the resurrection there shall be no palpable body, but the subtle quality of an invisible body shall be called the flesh, though there be no substance of flesh, then surely he that dies is one person, and he that rises again is another. But blessed Job destroys this assertion for them by a truth-telling voice, in that he says, *Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.* But we, following the faith that blessed Job held, and truly believing the palpable Body of our Redeemer after His resurrection, confess that our flesh after the resurrection will be at once both the same and different, the same in respect of nature, different in respect of glory, the same in its reality, different in its power. Thus it will be subtle, in that it will be incorruptible; it will be palpable, in that it will not lose the essence of its very and true nature. But that same assurance of the resurrection the holy man subjoins with what sure hope he holds it, with what certainty he awaits it. It goes on;

This my hope is laid up in my bosom.

78. We suppose that we hold nothing more surely than what we have in our bosom; and so he kept 'hope laid up in his bosom,' in that he laid hold beforehand on true cer- lviii.

Job 19, 28. 29. Lit. tainty concerning the hope of the resurrection. But whereas he made known that the day of the resurrection would come, he now, whether in his own voice, or in a figure of the holy and universal Church, reproves the deeds of the wicked, and foretells the Judgment which ensues on the day of the resurrection. For he straightway adds;

Ver. 28. 29. *Wherefore then do ye now say, Let us persecute him, and find out the root of the word against him? Fly therefore from the face of the sword, for the sword is an avenger of wickedness; and know that there is a judgment.*

lix. 79. For in the first sentence he reproved the deeds of the wicked, while in the following he made known the punishments proceeding from the Divine judgment. Thus he saith, *Wherefore then do ye now say; Let us persecute him and find out the root of the word against him?* Wicked persons, because they hear with wrong earnestness things well put forth, and seek to find in the tongue of the righteous an inlet for accusation, what else do they but 'seek the root of the word against him,' from which same they may take the commencement of speaking, and in the accusing of him expand the branches of evil talkativeness? But when the holy man meets with such things at the hands of wicked men, it is not against them but rather for them that he feels sorrow, and reproves the things wickedly harboured in the heart, and shews them evil for them to escape, saying, *Fly therefore from the face of the sword; for the sword is the avenger of wickedness; and know that there is a judgment.* Every one that does wicked things, even herein, that he is too indifferent to fear this, does not know of there being a judgment of God. For if he did know that this was a thing to be feared, he would never do things that are destined to be punished in it. For there are very many who know that there is a final Judgment as far as the words go, but by acting wickedly they bear witness that they do not know it. Since whereas he does not dread this as he ought, he does not yet know with what a tempest of terror it will come. For if he had[1] been taught to estimate the weight of the dreadful scrutiny, surely in fearing he would guard against the day of wrath. Moreover, 'to fly from the face of the sword,' is to propitiate the sentence of the strict visitation before it appears. For the

[1] al. 'he who had'

terribleness of the Judge cannot be avoided saving before the Judgment. Now He is not discerned, but is appeased by prayers. But when He shall sit on that dreadful inquest, He is both able to be seen and not able any longer to be propitiated; in that the doings of the wicked which He bore long while in silence, He shall pay back all of them together in wrath. Whence it is necessary to fear the Judge now, while He does not yet execute judgment, while He bears patiently for long, while He still tolerates the wickedness that He sees, lest when He has once plucked out His hand in the awarding of vengeance, He strike the more severely in judgment, in proportion as He waited longer before judgment.

BOOK XV.

In which there is a brief explanation given of the twentieth and twenty-first chapter of the Book of Job.

THAT the friends of blessed Job could never have been bad men, the words of Zophar the Naamathite bear witness, who on hearing from his lips the terribleness of the Judgment to come, adds directly;

Ver. 1. *Therefore do my thoughts changefully succeed one another, and my mind is transported diverse ways.*

i. LIT. 1. As though he said in plain words; 'Because I see the terribleness of the last Judgment, therefore I am confounded in a state of consternation by the tumults of my thoughts.' For the mind spreads itself wider in its range of thought, the more it considers how dreadful that is which threatens it. And 'the mind is transported diverse ways,' when with anxious alarm she weighs and considers, one while the evil she has done, at another time the good she has left undone, now all the blameable practices that she remains in, and now the right habits that she sees to be lacking to her. But though the friends of blessed Job, instructed by habituation to his life, knew how to live well, yet, being uninstructed to form an exact estimate of God's judgments, that any one of the righteous can be susceptible of ills here below, they did not believe possible. And hence they imagined that holy man to be wicked, whom they saw scourged, and, in consequence of this suspicion, it came to pass that they slipt aside into the upbraiding of him as well, whereunto nevertheless they do not descend, save under the guise of a kind of respect. Hence Zophar adds in these words;

Ver. 3. *The lesson whereby thou dost reproach me I will hear; and the spirit of my understanding will answer me.*

ii. 2. As though he said in plain words; 'Thy words indeed I hear, but whether they were delivered aright, I discern by

the spirit of my understanding.' For they that disregard the words of the teacher, employ his teaching not for an assistance but for an occasion of contention, rather that they may criticise the things heard than to follow them. This then being premised with a sort of restraint, he now springs out into the open reviling of the blessed man, when he adds; Book XV.

Ver. 4, 5. *I know this of old, since man was placed upon earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment.*

3. Now it is clear to be seen that being puffed up with the spirit of his understanding, he warps the sentences, which he pronounces against the ungodly, to the reproving of blessed Job. For in him whom he first saw following right ways, and afterwards undergoing punishment, he reckons all that he saw to have been but hypocrisy, in that he did not believe it possible for a just servant to be put to distress by a just God. But those same sentences, which, being right, he did not pronounce in a right way, let us go through, weighing them with earnest intentness of mind; and setting at nought what he says untrue against blessed Job, let us consider how true are the things he speaks, if he were speaking them against the ungodly. *I know this of old, since man was placed upon earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short.* Going to tell the shortness of the present life, he carried back the eye of the interior to the outset of the commencement, in order to collect from the past how nothing all things are, that while they continue to be, seem to be something. For if we carry the eyes of our imagination from the very commencement of the human race up to the present time in which we now are, we see how short all was that was of a nature to come to an end. Let us imagine a man to have lived from the first day of the world's creation to this present day, yet on this day to end the life, which he seemed to have continued to so great a length, lo, the end is come, the things past are already become nought, in that every thing has passed away. For the future in this world is nought, in that not a moment, or the very shortest particle of time remains to our life. Where then is that long time, which, comprehended between the beginning and the end, is so wasted in substance, just as if it had not ever been even short in duration? iii.

Job 20, 6. 7. Lit. 4. Therefore because the wicked have their heart centered in this life, surely they set themselves up therein and seek to win applause. They are lifted up by the flattery of the lips, having no desire to be good, but only to be called so. Which praise they think is of a great length while they receive it, but understand to have been brief when they lose it. Whence it is well said against these wicked persons, *This I know of old, since man was placed upon earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short;* and it is well added, *And the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment.* It often happens that while the hypocrite passes himself off for holy, without a fear of letting himself appear wicked, he is honoured of all men, and the high credit of holiness is awarded to him, by those who can make out the outside, but have no eyes to look into the interior of things. Whence it happens, that he triumphs in having the first seat, is overjoyed in getting the first couch, filled with pride at receiving the first invitation, elevated at the respectful address of his followers, swoln in the pride of his heart at the observance of his dependents, as is said of such by the voice of Truth Himself. *But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.* But all this joy of theirs, compared with eternity, what will become of it, when, the crisis of death being upon them, it perishes, as though it had never been? Of which same joy the mirth is all gone, the punishment remains, and when the thing is lost, the guilt[1] endures. And it is well said; *The joy of the hypocrite like a point.* For in making a point the style is lifted up as soon as set down, and there is no lingering, that it may be drawn along a line to be described. And so the joy of the hypocrite 'is like a point,' in that it appears for a moment, and is gone for ever; and just as the style, in the case of a point, while set down is lifted up in one, so the hypocrite, whilst he touches, parts with the joys of the present life. Concerning whom it is also added;

Mat. 23, 5.

[1] causa, cirία?

Ver. 6, 7. *Though his pride mount up unto the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds: Yet he shall perish at last like the dunghill.*

5. The pride of the hypocrite is said to ' mount up unto the heavens,' when his high-mindedness has the appearance of leading a heavenly life; and his ' head as it were reaches unto the clouds,' when the leading part, i. e. his intellect, is thought to equal the merits of the Saints that have gone before. Yet he ' perishes at last like the dunghill,' because at his death, when he is led to torments, being full of the dung of evil habits, he is trodden under foot of evil spirits. For the joys of the present life, which the unrighteous account great good, righteous men look upon as dung. Whence it is written; *A slothful man is stoned with the dung of oxen.* Thus he that will not follow God is made slothful in the love of the life everlasting. And as often as he is stricken with the loss of temporal goods, he is surely troubled on the score of those things, which the righteous look down upon as ' dung:' what else is it with him, then, that is bruised with the buffeting of things earthly, than that he ' is stoned with the dung of oxen?' And the hypocrite is justly described like a dunghill, in that while he aims to obtain temporal glory, at one time in the imagination of his heart he swells within himself, at another time he grudges that same glory to some, and laughs at others having it really. For all the evil qualities then that he is full of, his breast as it were is defiled with so much dung, in the eye of the Eternal Judge. Therefore it may be said, *Though his pride mount up unto the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds, yet he shall perish at last like the dunghill.* Which same, though he feign to lead a heavenly life, though he shew his view of truth to accord with the true preachers, yet he ' perishes like a dunghill in the end,' in that his soul is damned for the stench of his evil qualities. It goes on;

Book XV. iv. Ecclus. 22, 2.

They which had seen him shall say, Where is he?

6. It generally happens that the life of the hypocrite is even by all men discovered at the end to be damnable, for it to be made appear by plainer marks now what sort they were of. They then that saw him elate at this present time shall say of him when dead, *Where is he?* For neither is he seen here where he was elated, nor yet in the rest of eternity, which he was supposed to be of. Concerning the shortness of whose life it is yet further added with fitness;

v.

Job 20, 8. Lit. Ver. 8. *He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found: yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night.*

vi. 7. What else is the life of the hypocrite but the vision of a phantom, which exhibits that in semblance which it does not possess in truth? Whence too it is justly likened to 'a dream,' in that all praise and glory is, as it were, gone from him whilst it is being held. For oftentimes in a 'vision of the night,' some that are poor are full of wonder that they are made rich, they see honours awarded to them, they behold heaps of riches, a multitude of attendants, the most beautiful garments, abundance of food presented to them. They are delighted to have escaped poverty, which they bore with a grieved spirit; but on a sudden, when they wake, they find how false all the joy was which they felt, and they are sad that they have awoke, in that real want gripes them awake. Thus the minds of hypocrites, whilst what they do is one thing, and what they exhibit to men another, win applause by the mere exhibiting of holy living; in the esteem of men they are set before numbers that are better, and whilst they are highminded with the secret thought within, they exhibit themselves without as humble. And whereas they are excessively commended by men, they imagine that in the eyes of God also they are such, as they delight to make themselves known to be to their fellow-creatures. Hence it comes to pass that they assume that they will likewise obtain the rewards of eternal life, and they who triumph here below, upon the commendations of their fellow-creatures, doubt not for a moment that they will have rest there; but in the midst of this the secret hour of their call creeps upon them, and while they shut the eyes of the flesh they open those of the spirit, and so soon as they have gotten eternal punishments, they there see, that they were rich in the repute for virtues only in sleep. Well then is it said of such a hypocrite, *Yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night.* For this, that he sees himself for a brief space rich in man's esteem, is of the show of a phantasm, not of the substance of virtue[1]. For when his soul wakes up at the dissolution of the flesh, it learns, assuredly, that it was in a sleeping state that it saw the partial regards of men about it. It goes on;

[1] al. 'of reality.'

Ver. 9. *The eye also which saw him shall see him no more: neither shall his place any more behold him.* Book XV.

8. What is the ‘ place’ of the hypocrite, saving the heart of his flatterers? For there he rests, where he finds partialities towards him. Therefore ‘ the eye that saw him shall see him no more,’ because being removed by death, he is hidden from his foolish lovers, who were wont to behold him, admiring him. ‘ Neither shall his place any more behold him,’ because the tongues of his flatterers do not follow him with their partialities to the Judgment. Yet so long as he lives he does not cease to teach his followers likewise the things that he practises himself; and through the frowardness of his erring way he begets others also in a likeness to that false pretension which he shews forth. Concerning whom it is fitly added in this place, vii.

Ver. 10. *His children shall be wasted with poverty.*

9. It is written, *For into a malicious soul wisdom shall not enter;* and it is declared by the Psalmist, *The rich have lacked and been a hungred.* For if their want and hunger were spoken of outward starving, then surely they would be any thing but rich, who were in want of the bread of the body. But forasmuch as whilst they are increased without, they are rendered void within, they are described as rich and needy at one and the same time, in that they never entitle themselves to be filled with the bread of wisdom. And so the children of this hypocrite are ‘ worn down with want,’ because they that are born in hypocrisy in mimicry of him, whilst they do not hold the substance of truth, are brought to nought in the penury of the heart. viii. Wisd. 1, 4. Ps. 34, 10.

And his hands shall repay him his own grief.

10. What is denoted by ‘ hands,’ saving works? Thus ‘ his hands will repay him grief,’ because he will reap just damnation from his wicked course of life. Now it is well said, not ‘ give,’ but ‘ repay,’ in that his froward deeds shall pay him back eternal punishment like a kind of debt. But before he is brought to eternal punishment, let him add more fully the sort of character that he shews himself here. It goes on, ix.

His bones shall be full of the sin of his youth, and shall sleep with him in the dust.

Job 20, 10. Moral. x.

11. The origin of a bad beginning by preoccupying further multiplies the causes of sin. For when a man has begun to do evil, by custom he now grows to a worse height in that which he had begun. What then is the 'youth' of this hypocrite, but the beginning of wickedness, since in youth passion now begins to kindle? And the hypocrite then has youth, when he begins to long for and to embrace the passion for glory. Which same, whilst the soft salves of flatterers redouble it, they give strength to, and as it were turn it into bones. For what he begins badly, he is daily strengthening for the worse by custom. Therefore let it be said; *His bones shall be full of the sin of his youth;* in that the rigid habits of evil practices in him are taken from the sin of an ill beginning. Hence it is written in the Proverbs, *The young man according to his own way, when he is old, will never depart therefrom.* Which same 'bones' truly 'will sleep with him in the dust,' for so long do evil practices endure in him, until they drag him to the dust of death. Since for his 'bones,' or evil habits, to 'sleep with him in the dust' is for these never to quit him even to the very dust, that is, never to cease from sin even until death. Therefore bad habits, which are once begun, keep hold of him, and daily become more hardened. And they 'sleep with him in the dust,' because they are never ended but with his life. But this may be taken in another sense also.

Prov. 22, 6.

12. For the hypocrite occasionally has something in practice that is strong and vigorous, but whilst he makes believe to have many good points that he is without, he loses even these which he has. Whence it is well said now; *His bones shall be full of the sin of his youth.* For whereas in his levity and fickleness he does many things like a child, even in strong ones which he may do he is enervated in sin. Which same 'bones shall sleep with him in the dust,' because as all that hypocrisy which he carries on is dust, so too whatever he has in him that is strong is robbed of all its solidity, so that by pretension to virtue he loses that also which there might have been in him of a virtuous nature. And so for 'his bones' to 'sleep with him in the dust' is even if there be things done well, for them to come to nought together with his evil deeds. It proceeds;

Ver. 12. *For when wickedness shall be sweet in his mouth, he will hide it under his tongue.*

xi.

13. 'Wickedness is sweet in the mouth' of the hypocrite, in that evil tastes sweet to him in the thought. For 'the mouth' of the heart is the thought, whereof it is written; *Deceitful lips spake evil*[a] *in a double heart.* Now the evil that is thus sweet in the mouth of the hypocrite is hidden under the tongue, in that the harshness of an evil disposition, which lies hidden in the mind, is concealed under the cloak of a mild address. For the evil would be *on* the tongue and not under it, if the hypocrite in speaking disclosed the mischievousness of his froward heart. But as is the case with most of the righteous, when they see any persons acting badly, who deserve to be visited with severe rebukes, they put harshness on the tongue, but under the tongue cover the kindness of their feelings; (whence too it is said to Holy Church by the voice of the Spouse; *Honey and milk are under Thy tongue.* For they that shrink from disclosing the sweetness of their inward feeling to the weak, and so in speaking strike them with a degree of harshness, and yet amongst their harsh words secretly as it were let drop a sprinkling of sweetness, these persons clearly have sweetness not on the tongue, but under the tongue, in that amidst the hard words which they utter, they give out some that are sweet and softened, whereby the wounded mind may be cheered and refreshed by kindness;) so with the wicked severally, because they have evil not upon the tongue, but under the tongue, in the words of their mouth they hold out sweet things, and in the thoughts of their heart are plotting mischiefs. For it is hence that Joab held the beard of Amasa with his right hand, whilst secretly putting his left hand to his sword, he shed out his bowels. For to hold the chin with the right hand is to caress as if in kindness. But he puts his left hand to his sword, who in secret strikes in malice. Hence too it is written concerning their head himself; *Under his tongue is mischief and pain.* For he that doth not display openly the ill that he designs, does not put forth on the tongue the mischief and pain of those,

Ps.12,2.

Cant. 4, 11.

2 Sam. 20, 9.

Ps.10,7.

[a] The word *evil* is not in the Vulgate, nor in all copies of LXX.

Job 20, 13. 14. Lit. whose destruction he aims at, but keeps them close under the tongue. Now it is rightly added of this hypocrite,

Ver. 13. *He will spare it, and forsake it not, but keep it still within his throat.*

xii. 14. For the evil that he delights in he 'spares,' because he does not, by practising penance, hunt it down in himself. Whence too it is added; *and forsake it not.* For if he had the mind to 'forsake,' he would not 'spare' it, but would pursue it closely. Now he 'keeps it within his throat;' because he so retains it in thought, that he never utters it in speech. It goes on;

Ver. 14. *His bread in his belly shall be turned into the gall of asps within him.*

xiii. 15. What bread is in the belly, the same is fulness of earthly gratification in the mind. So let the hypocrite now be filled to the full with the praises tendered him, let him revel in honours, 'his bread in his belly is turned into the gall of asps,' because the fulness of transitory enjoyment, in the final Retribution, will be turned to bitterness, in that what here passed for the praise of greatness is discovered to have been 'the gall of asps,' i. e. the prompting of evil spirits. For the wicked then perceive that they are infected with the venom of the old serpent, when, being delivered over to avenging flames, they are tormented along with that prompter of theirs. And so this 'bread' has one sort of taste in the mouth, and another in the belly, in that the joy of transitory pleasure is sweet, while it is tasted here by a chewing of teeth, as it were, but it turns bitter in the belly, because when the joy is past it is swallowed to his ruing.

16. Or indeed forasmuch as bread is not unsuitably taken for the sense of the Holy Scriptures, which refreshes the mind and furnishes it with the sinews of right practice, and the hypocrite generally makes it his object to be well instructed in the mysteries of Holy Writ, not that he may live by them, but that it may appear to the rest of the world how learned he is, his 'bread in his bowels is turned into the gall of asps,' in that whilst he boasts of the knowledge of the Sacred Law, he converts the draught of life into a cup of poison to himself, and dies in a state of reprobation

from the same cause, whence he appeared to derive instruction unto life. Nor is this again unfitly taken to be the meaning, that while the hypocrite sometimes applies himself to the word of instruction for display, being blinded by God's judgment, he takes in a wrong sense that very word which he seeks in a wrong spirit. But when he falls into heretical error, it is his fate, that as by the 'gall of asps,' so the unhappy wretch perishes by 'bread;' and in his own self-instruction he finds death, because in the words of life he never sought life. But it often happens that the sentences of divine warning, even if they be understood rightly by the hypocrite, forasmuch as he neglects to observe them in practice, are lost to him even before the course of the present life is at an end, so that it is taken from him to know, what while he knew he refused to practise. Hence it is added; Book XV.

Ver. 15. *The riches he hath swallowed down, he shall vomit up, and God shall cast them out of his belly.*

17. The hypocrite desires to know the revelations of God, yet not to practise them. He would speak sagely, but not live so. For this reason, then, that he does not do what he knows, even that which he knows he loses, that forasmuch as he does not unite pure practice with his knowledge, contemning purity of right practice he loses the knowledge also. Therefore the 'riches' of the Sacred Law, which he 'swallowed' in reading, he vomits in forgetting, and God 'casts them out of his belly,' in that what he would not observe to do, by a righteous judgment He roots out of his recollection, that at all events he should not keep the precepts of God in the tongue, which he kept not in his life. Whence it is said by the Prophet; *But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, and that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?* Which words of instruction if it ever at any time chance that the hypocrite should seem to retain in his mouth until the end, he will be condemned the more on the very grounds, whereon not even a bad man is ever deprived of the good gift of God. For it is written; *To those that remember His commandments to do them.* He then that keeps His commandments in mind, but never xiv. Ps. 50, 16. Ps. 103, 18.

Jos 20, 18. does them, such an one holds in the words of instruction the sentences whereby he is condemned.

Lit.

Zech. 5, 2. 3. 18. For hence it is written in Zechariah; *What seest thou, Zechariah? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits. This said he to me; This is the curse that goeth over the face of the whole earth. For every one that stealeth shall be judged as on this side according to it.* For what is a 'flying roll' saving Holy Writ, which whilst it tells us of heavenly themes, lifts up the bent of the mind to things on high; for while we see that it is above us, we leave minding, i. e. desiring things below. And it is described as having 'a breadth of ten cubits' and a 'length of twenty cubits,' in that the breadth of our practice is single, and the long expectance of hope is extended to double, since in return for our good practice both here there is peace of mind, and there eternal joys in store for us, as Truth bears witness, Who saith;

Mat. 19, 29. *And every one that hath forsaken houses or lands, &c. shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.* For the number one hundred is completed by the number ten multiplied ten times. Thus he gets back an hundredfold [b], who, though he has nothing, by the mere perfection of his mind alone, no longer seeks to possess any thing in this world. And in this way, since by this same we have a double measure paid back to us for a single one, that roll is justly drawn out through twenty cubits in length, which is carried out in breadth through ten. But because these very sacred oracles stand for eternal condemnation to those who either will not acquaint themselves with them, or in any wise when made acquainted with them set them at nought, it is rightly said of this roll, *This is the curse, which goeth forth over the face of the whole earth.* And wherefore it is called a curse is added; *For every one that is a thief,* as it is therein written, *shall be judged.* Therefore the hypocrite, as he cares not to live after the words of the law which he knows, and seeks golden opinions by store of instruction, will be 'a thief to be judged,' since by this, that he speaks just words, he usurps to himself the praise of the

[b] perhaps 'an hundredfold *here*,' (reading Hic.)

just man's life. Concerning whom it is still farther added rightly,

Ver. 16. *He shall suck the head of asps: the viper's tongue shall slay him.*

19. The 'asp' is a small serpent, but the 'viper' hath more length of body. And asps produce eggs, and their young are hatched from the eggs. But when vipers have conceived, their young ravin in their womb, which bursting the parents' sides issue out of their bellies. Hence too it is called the 'viper,' because it is a '[1]parent by violence.' Thus the viper is so produced that it comes forth by violence, and is brought into the world by the killing of the mother. What then is represented by the little asps, saving the hidden suggestions of impure spirits, who steal upon[e] the hearts of men by slight prompting at first, and what by the 'viper's tongue' save the violent temptation of the devil? For at first he steals upon them gently, but afterwards he drags them even by force. And so he 'sucks the poison of asps,' in that the little beginning of secret suggestion is first produced in the heart, but 'the viper's tongue slayeth him,' in that afterwards the captive soul is killed by the venom of violent temptation. In the first case unclean spirits speak to the heart of man with their crafty counsels, and these, while they persuade with gentleness, as it were infuse the poison of asps. Whence it is written, *They break asps' eggs, and weave the spider's web; He that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is hatched breaketh out into a basilisk.* Since to 'break asps' eggs,' to wicked men is, to manifest by evil deeds the counsels of evil spirits, which lurk in their hearts. Moreover, to 'weave spiders' webs' is, on account of the lust of this world, to be busied in any temporal employments. Which, whilst they are established with no stedfastness, assuredly are carried off by the wind of a mortal life. And it is well added; *He that eateth of their eggs dieth.* In that he that admits the counsels of impure spirits kills the life of his soul in him. 'And that which is hatched, breaketh out into a basilisk,' in that the suggestion of the bad spirit which is covered up in the heart, is nursed

XV.

[1] 'viparit.'

Is. 59, 5.

[e] Ben. 'surripiunt,' Steal from, but others 'surrepunt.'

Job 20. 17. Lit. unto full iniquity. For 'basilisk'[d] means the king of serpents, and who is the head of the sons of perdition, save Antichrist? Therefore 'that, which is hatched, will break out into a basilisk,' in that he who harbours in himself the counsel of the 'asp' to nourish them to life, being made a member of the wicked head, is engrafted into the body of Antichrist. Of which hypocrite it is said, *He shall suck the head of asps, and the viper's tongue shall slay him*, in that when he gladly welcomes the evil suggestion of our old enemy, afterwards he surrenders himself vanquished to his forcible temptations. Hence too in Paradise, to man when he was standing, he brought in words of soft suggestion, but him whom he once caught away to the act of consent, now henceforth he forces on even resisting him, and conquered by the gratifications of his corrupt state of being, kills him well nigh by dint of violence. But perhaps we may be able to make out the meaning of these same sentences by a contrary mode of interpretation. Thus because the 'asp' kills quickly by its venom, but the 'viper' more slowly, by the 'asp' we have denoted a violent and instantaneous temptation, but by the 'viper' a gentle and prolonged one. And hence to the one death is said to lie in the 'sucking of the head,' but to the viper 'in the tongue,' in that a sudden temptation often as soon as it arises kills the soul off its guard, but a lengthened temptation, because it is longer recommending evil things by the suggesting of them, kills as does a viper with its tongue. And because every hypocrite, being penetrated with the suggestion of evil spirits, as with the poison of serpents, never considers what are the gifts from above of the Holy Spirit, while he spreads abroad the bent of the heart in golden opinions without, it is rightly added;

Ver. 17. *He shall not see the streamlets of the torrent river of honey and butter.*

xvi. John 7, 38. 39. 20. The Lord saith in the Gospel; *He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* Where the Evangelist subjoins, saying, *But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive.* And so 'the streamlets of

[d] 'Regulus,' which is a translation of the Greek Βασιλίσκος. see Plin. viii. 21.

the river' are the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Charity is 'a streamlet of the river,' faith is 'a streamlet of the river,' hope is 'a streamlet of the river.' But because no hypocrite ever loves either God or his neighbour, when he makes the transitory glory of the world his aim, he does not see the streamlets of the river, in that he is not watered with the overflowing of charity. Whereas the hypocrite goes after present gains, he disregards future blessings, and not having faith, he sees not in the mind 'the streamlet of the river,' inasmuch as *faith is the evidence of things not seen.* And while the hypocrite clings to the things that are seen, he makes light of those, which are not seen, therefore he does not see the 'streamlets of the river' in desire, in that he is taken up with visible things alone. And it is written, *For what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?* He then would have seen 'streamlets of the river' if he had shut his eyes to the glory of this world, and opened them to the love of the heavenly country. And observe that he does not say 'streams,' but 'streamlets.' For the 'streamlets of the river' may be taken for those spiritual gifts, which trickle in such fine streams from heavenly sources into the soul of him that loveth, that they can never be compassed* by the mouth of the flesh. For it is often the case that the spirit of him that loves is filled with such a mighty gift of contemplation, that it has power to see what it has not power to utter. Now the 'torrent river' is the inundation of the Holy Spirit itself, which in exuberant outpouring is gathered in the soul of him in contemplation, when his mind is full beyond what he is able to comprehend. And it is necessary to be known, that when the grace of the Holy Spirit bathes us, it fills us with 'honey and butter' equally. For 'honey' falls from above, but 'butter' is drawn from the milk of animals, and so 'honey' is from the air, 'butter' from the flesh. But the Only-begotten Son of the Most High Father, while He is God above all things, was made Man one among all things. Who when he replenished us with the sweetness of His Divine Nature and the mystery of His Incarnation, satisfied us with 'honey and butter' at once. And so seeing that the Holy Spirit rejoices the soul It has filled, at once with the

Heb. 11, 1.

Rom. 8, 24.

* 'Expleri.' K. 'ut per eos Carnis *desideria* expleri nequeant;' 'that by them the desires of the flesh cannot be satisfied.'

Job 20, 18. Myst. sweetness of His divinity and the belief of His Incarnation, these are described as 'the streamlets of the torrent river of honey and butter' together, in that they both refresh the soul with sweetness by the exalted knowledge of God, and anoint it with the mystery of the Benefit[1] by the grace of the Incarnation. But whereas this hypocrite, being dissipated in outward regards, does not taste these interior gifts, he adjoins to what after punishments he is tending, in that it is added;

1 'Charismatis.'

Ver. 18. *He shall pay for all the things that he hath done, nor yet shall he be consumed.*

xvii. Lit. 21. For he 'pays' in torment for those desires, which he retained here contrary to right, and being consigned to avenging flames, he is always dying, in that he is always kept alive in death. For he is never consumed in death, in that if his life in dying were consumed, his punishment likewise would be brought to an end together with his life; but that he may be tormented without end, he is forced to live on without end in punishment, that he whose life here was dead in sin, may have his death there living in punishment. Let him say then; *He shall pay for all the things that he hath done, nor yet shall he be consumed*, forasmuch as he is tormented, and not put out, he dies and lives, he is falling away and holding on, always finishing, without being finished. These things are very terrible in the hearing of the ear only, how infinitely more terrible in the enduring of them! Now because the multiplicity of his wickedness demands that he should never be without punishment, it is fitly added;

According to the multitude of his inventions shall he also suffer.

xviii. 22. For whereas he found out many things in order to sin, he is tormented with new inventions in punishment. Since what he could not have suspected here, he is made sensible of there, when he is given over to vengeance. For as the Elect in exercising themselves in good works, sometimes set themselves to do more than the Lord thought fit to bid them, (for virginity of the flesh is no where commanded, but only commended; since if it were commanded, then it would follow that wedlock must henceforth be deemed sin, and yet there are many strong in the virtue of virginity, so as to render

more in service than they received in command,) so very commonly the wicked are each practised in bad ways, so that they find out in evil doing more for them to do than by the practice of the lost they received examples of wickedness. And hence they are stricken with the torments of an ampler retribution, in that they too of their own heads invented practices on an ampler scale, which they deserve to be stricken for. And so it is well said, *According to the multitude of his inventions shall he also suffer.* For he would not find out new wickedness, except he also sought it; and he would not seek it, except he was eager to do it of set purpose. Therefore in his tormenting the excessiveness of evil devising is taken into account, and he receives the pain of a worthy recompense. And although the woe of all the damned is infinite, yet they have worse torments inflicted upon them, who invented many things in wicked ways by their desires as well. Now since Zophar has brought in the punishment of this hypocrite, he immediately adds his sin, nor does he describe any one in particular, but that from which all sins have their origin. For it is written, *Covetousness is the root of all evil.* He then, whom covetousness is described as having dominion over, surely is proved to be subject to all evil propensities. Thus he subjoins, Book XV. 1 Tim. 6, 10.

Ver. 19, 20. *Because he hath broken down and laid bare the house of the poor, because he hath violently taken it away and not builded it, neither is he satisfied in his belly.*

23. He 'breaks in pieces and lays bare the house of the poor,' who is not ashamed as well to rob out of avarice him whom he crushes by power. 'He violently taketh it away and doth not build it.' As if it were expressed in plain words; 'He that ought to have builded it, he over and above takes it away.' For the Lord Who is to come in judgment, shall say to the reprobate, *For I was an hungred, and ye gave Me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in; naked, and ye covered Me not, &c.* as the consequence of which sin it is added, *Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* If then he is sentenced to so great a penalty, who is convicted merely of not having xix. Mat. 25, 42. 43. v. 41.

Job 20, 20. 21. Lit. given away his own, with what punishment does not that man deserve to be stricken, who is proved to have taken the things of others also? And so he 'took it away and did not build it up,' in that he not only never gave any thing of his own, but also took away what was another's. Now it is well added; *Surely his belly shall not be satisfied.* For the 'belly' of the wicked man is avarice, in that there is collected together in it whatsoever is swallowed with wrong desire. But it is plain that avarice is not extinguished, but increased by the objects desired. For like fire, when it has got fuel to feed on, it increases; and from the same cause that the flame appears to be restrained for a moment, it is seen a little while after to spread itself out. And it often happens that when Almighty God is greatly wroth with the covetous soul, He first lets all things accrue to it according to its wish, and afterwards takes it away in vengeance, that it may undergo eternal punishments on account of them. And hence it is added;

And when he shall have that which he desired, he shall not be able to possess it.

xx. 24. For it is a mark of greater indignation, when that thing is given which is desired amiss, and therefrom there ensues sudden retribution, because he got that likewise, which he went after when God was wroth the while. And hence it is said by the Psalmist, where the people are described as having lusted after flesh for food in a wrong way; Ps. 78, 30. 31. *But while their meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them, and slew the most of them.* For the judgments of God are used to be slower in appearing, when wrong wishes are hindered that they should not be put in execution. For the quicker that a bad wish is suffered to be fulfilled, it is usually punished the more speedily in proportion. And so by the very act, whereby the hypocrite is aggrandized in haste to become powerful, it is brought to pass with proportionate rapidity, that he should not be. For the trees too that grow slower, last to number many years, and those which make way in a short space of time, wither the sooner, and in a manner, whilst they are hasting to be, they are going the way not to be. It goes on;

Ver. 21. *There shall none of his meat be left.*

25. ‘ His meat’ is all that he coveted with wrong desire; but when the hypocrite is struck, ‘ there is none of his meat left,’ in that when he is himself carried to eternal punishments, he is parted from all the good things that he had gotten here. And hence it is yet further added; Book XV. xxi.

Therefore shall nought remain from his goods.

For if ‘ aught did remain of his goods,’ he would take along with him the things that he had possession of. But because while going after every thing, he would not fear the Judge, upon being removed out of this life, he goes naked to the Judge. To which same wicked man, it is but little for his recompensing that he is tormented in after punishment, if only in this life he is let to go free. But there is no liberty in sin, seeing that it is written; *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;* and to the wicked soul usually its very own sin becomes its own punishment. And hence it is rightly added; 2 Cor. 3, 17.

In the fulness of his sufficiency, he shall be in straits.

26. For first from avarice he pants to heap together things he covets, and when he has gathered together a great multitude as it were in a kind of belly of avarice, ‘ in the fulness of his sufficiency, he is in straits,’ in that whilst he is full of anxiety how he may keep the things he has gotten, his own fulness itself straitens him. For the field of a certain rich man had brought abundant fruits, but because he had not where to lay up such stores, he said, *What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do; I will pull down my barns, and build greater.* He then who from being straitened by his abundance said, *What shall I do?* was in a fever as if oppressed with a quantity of food. Let us consider with what longings he desired his land might produce abundant crops. Behold now his wishes are completed, seeing that the land did bring him abundant fruits. But forasmuch as there are not places enough to stow it away, the rich man being greatly aggrandized knows not what he should do. O straitness caused by ‘ fulness of sufficiency!’ By the abundance of his land the mind of the covetous man is straitened. For when he says, *What shall I do?* he clearly shews that, surcharged with the en- xxii. Luke 12, 17. 18.

Job 20, 21. 22. Lit. grossments of his desires, he went heavily under a kind of bundle of stores; and so it is well said, *In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits.* Since the mind of the covetous man, which had before looked for rest from plenty, was afterwards put to worse trouble for the keeping thereof. And hence it is also yet further added;

He shall burn with heat, and every woe shall come down upon him.

xxiii. 27. For first he had sorrow in the mere wearying of his own concupiscence how to snatch hold of the things coveted, how to secure one sort by arts of flattery, another sort by means of threats; but after that having possessed himself of the gifts of fortune he has attained his desire, another annoyance wears him down, viz. that it is with fear and anxiety he keeps safe that which he remembers it cost him infinite trouble to acquire. On every side he dreads conspirators, and fears to be himself subjected to the very thing that he has done to others. One more powerful he is afraid of, lest he be exposed to violence from him; a poor man, when he sees one, he looks on as a thief. The things themselves which he has hoarded up, he is at great pains about, lest by the failure of their own inherent nature they be consumed by neglect. In all these particulars then, because fear by itself is punishment, the unhappy wretch suffers things as great as he fears to suffer. And after this he is yet further brought to hell, and given over to eternal torments. Therefore 'every woe cometh down upon him,' who is at once consumed first here by the punishment of coveting, afterwards by the trouble of safe keeping, and There at some future time by the punishment of retributive wrath.

28. But it is wonderful security of the heart, not to seek what does not belong to us, but to rest content with each day's sustenance day by day. From which same security it is that the Rest everlasting also arises, seeing that from a good and quiet frame we pass to eternal delights. Contrariwise lost sinners are at once worn down here in desires, and there in torments. And from the labour of taking thought there arises to them the labour of pain, in that by the fever of avarice they are drawn into the fire of hell. And because,

as we have already often said, it often happens that the wicked man, the sooner he attains his object, is the more easily carried off to torment, it is added in the form of a wish;

Ver. 23. *Would that his belly might be filled, that God might cast the fury of His wrath upon him, and rain His war upon him.*

xxiv. 29. The Lord 'rains His war' upon this hypocrite, when he smites his deeds with the swords of His judgments. Thus for God to 'rain war,' is His pressing hard to destruction the life of the wicked man by His strict sentences from on high. God 'raining war' is His smiting the hearts that are lifted up against Himself, and His wounding the blasted soul with the darts of His judgments, as with a kind of thickening drops of rain, that when he is now carried off to judgment, one while he should remind himself how he coveted wickedly, and more wickedly set himself to heap together the things he coveted, at another time grieve that he is parted from the things thus heaped together, and one day feel the very fire of retribution, which, that he might not live well, he was too indifferent to foresee. It goes on;

Ver. 24. *He shall flee from the iron weapons; and rush upon the bow of brass.*

xxv. 30. We ought to know, that avarice sometimes steals upon men from pride, and sometimes from apprehension. Thus there are some who whilst they aim to appear with greater power, are kindled to the going after the things of others; and there are some, who while they are afraid lest the necessaries of the aids of life should be wanting to them, freely give their minds to covetousness, and go after the things of others when they fancy that their own may not be enough for them. Now all necessity is not unaptly termed 'iron,' in that it pains the life of him that wants with the wound of grief, as it is likewise expressed concerning the necessities of him, who, being sold by his brethren, led an afflicted life; *The iron entered into his soul.* What then are 'the iron weapons' but necessities of the present life, which press hard upon, and push to extremity, the life of the needy? Since iron is consumed by rust, but brass is naturally more difficult to be consumed by it. Therefore by 'iron' there is represented

Ps. 105, 18.

Job 20, 25. Lit. present necessity which is transient, but by 'brass' the eternal doom. And whereas the judgment Above is not heeded by the mind of the wicked man, it is justly likened to a 'bow,' since it strikes as it were out of ambush, whilst the person that is struck does not observe it. And thus, *He shall flee from the iron weapons, and rush upon the bow of brass;* in that whilst from dreading present necessities, he seizes things without number, through avariciousness he is exposing himself before the severe strokes of the final judgment; and, while he 'fleeth the weapons of iron,' he is encountered by the arrows from the bow of brass, in that, while foolishly providing against the ills of time, he is struck by eternal doom. For whosoever with guilt fleeth the hardness of need here, meets there an everlasting duration of just retribution. But before the time that he is hurried off to judgment, what are the things which this wicked man is busied in here, he yet further informs us. It goes on;

Ver. 25. *He is drawn and cometh out of his sheath, yea, lightening in his bitterness.*

xxvi. 31. This wicked man lays plots in arts of robbery on his neighbours. And whilst he is plotting mischief in the thoughts of his heart, it is as if 'the sword were still in its sheath;' but when he wickedly executes the mischief, which he has contrived, he 'cometh out of his sheath,' in that he is brought out to view, from the secresy of his thoughts, in the wickedness of evil doing. He is shewn to light in the deed, such as he was, hidden from view, in the thought. And observe that he says, *drawn and cometh out;* i. e. 'drawn' by the deceiver, but 'coming out' by the act of his own free will. For he that is 'drawn' unquestionably follows one that draws him. But he that 'cometh forth,' seems to act according to his own will. That man, then, who is at once drawn to the several wicked practices by our old enemy, and yet fast bound in the desire of them by his own free will, is described as 'drawn and coming forth from his sheath,' since this thing, that he issues forth from the bad thought to the worst enacting, belongs at once to the wickedness of that spirit that prompted, and of him that consented by an act of his own will.

32. The terribleness of whose power is further shewn,

where it is immediately added, *Yea, lightening in his bitterness.* For when the lightning comes suddenly from above, when it shines with terribleness before our eyes, it displays shining brightness, and strikes the objects before it. Thus, thus is it with the wicked man, when he has secured to himself the glory of the present life: by the same cause by which he is shewn to view bright by power in the present world, it is brought to pass that he is blasted at the last. For the wicked man's as it were 'lightening,' is his shining in this life's honour; but whereas the splendour of that glory is consigned to the eternal woes of hell, it is rightly said in this place, 'Yea, lightening in his bitterness.' For he that now seems as though he took delight in striking by terribleness and brightness, for this cause afterwards undergoes punishments for everlasting. And indeed it is written of a certain rich man that he 'fared splendidly' every day. Now it is one thing to shew 'splendidly,' and another to 'lighten;' for sometimes there is splendour without striking, but splendour with striking is described by the title of 'lightning.' He then who being placed in power does injury to others, is not unaptly entitled 'lightening,' in that from the same means whereby he is himself exalted against the good, as it were by the light of glory, the life of the good is made to feel torture. It goes on;

Terrible ones shall come and go over him.

33. Who are here called 'terrible ones' except evil spirits, who are to be feared and avoided by godly minds? And whereas those same evil spirits are to be believed to attach themselves severally to certain particular vices, when this wicked man seems to quit for a moment one set of faults, and begins to commit another, then surely 'the terrible ones come and go over him,' in that the soul of the bad man though one set of bad habits abandons, yet another takes possession of it. For you may often see the bad man, who is set in earthly power, agitated with furious passion, and executing all that his rage suggests; and when his fury is gone, then directly lust ravages his soul; when lust is stopped for a time, self-exaltation as on the ground of continency is immediately made to take its place in his heart, and that he may be feared by others, he aims to shew himself as an object of terror. But when the xxvii.

Job 20, 26. Lit. occasion requires that he should say any thing with double-dealing, laying aside in a certain sort the terribleness of pride, he flatters with an easy address, and when he ceases to shew himself proud, he does not dread to turn double-dealing. And so it is rightly said of him, in whose mind one vice continually takes the place of another, *Terrible ones come and go upon him;* since for all the evil habits that he is borne down with departing and taking each other's place, his soul is as it were overrun by as many evil spirits going and returning. But it is these things which he does in act, that issue outwardly by parts and pieces, for on his soul he has all things bad tied fast at once and together. Hence it is added;

Ver. 26. *All darkness is hid in his secret places.*

xxviii. 34. For though the hypocrite exhibits good actions on the surface, yet a certain 'darkness' of evil deeds appears in him; yet it less comes forth in act, than lies buried in his secret thought. For he who does not fulfil all things at once in execution, does in his heart in silence hold all things that may do mischief. Thus 'all darkness' is said to be 'hid in his secret places,' in that though he does not exhibit to view all things evil in himself, yet he aims to bring down all upon his fellow-creatures. Now let him add the retribution, which this soul so reprobate shall be visited with. It goes on;

A fire that is not kindled shall consume him.

xxix. 35. Most wonderfully in these few words is the fire of hell set forth! For bodily fire, in order to become fire, stands in need of bodily fuel; and when it is necessary for it to be preserved, as we well know, it is nourished by wood heaped upon it, neither can it be, except by being kindled, nor live, save by being cherished. But contrarily the fire of hell, whilst it is a bodily fire, and bodily consumes the children of perdition that are cast into it, is neither kindled by human effort, nor kept alive by wood, but being once made to be, it lasts unextinguishable: at one and the same time it needs no kindling, and lacks not heat. And so it is well said of this wicked one; *A fire not kindled shall consume him;* in that the justice of the Almighty, foreseeing future events, did from the very beginning of the world create the fire of hell, which should once begin in the punishment of the wicked, but never end its heat even without fuel. But it is necessary to

know, that all the children of perdition, as they sinned in spirit and flesh conjointly, are there tormented in spirit and flesh alike. Hence it is said by the Psalmist, *Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of Thine anger. The Lord shall confound them in His wrath, and the fire shall devour them.* For an 'oven' is heated within; but he who is 'devoured by fire' begins to be consumed from the outside. Thus that holy Scripture might shew that the lost burn both within and without, it testifies that they are at once 'devoured by fire,' and 'made as a fiery oven,' that by fire they should be tormented in the body, and by grief burn in spirit. Hence in this place too, when it is declared of the ungodly man that *a fire that is not kindled shall consume him*, it is forthwith added concerning his spirit; Book XV. Ps.21,9.

Being left in his tabernacle, it shall go ill with him.

36. The 'tabernacle' of the wicked man is his flesh, in that he inhabits it in joyfulness, and, if it were possible, wishes he might never quit it. But the righteous, as they place their delight in the prospect of heavenly rewards, and have their conversation in heaven, while they are still in the flesh are as if they were no longer in the flesh, in that they are not fed with any gratification of the flesh. And hence it is said to some persons; *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit:* not that they were not in the flesh, who by the epistles of their master received charges of exhortation; but it is in a manner to be no longer 'in the flesh,' not to own aught connected with the love of fleshly objects. But on the other hand this wicked man, because he set all his delight in a fleshly life, 'dwelt in the tabernacle' of the flesh. Which very flesh when he shall receive back in the resurrection, he shall burn along with it delivered over to the fires of hell. Then he longs to be brought out of it; then he seeks, if he might be able, to escape from his torments; then he begins to wish he could get quit of that which he loved: but because he preferred that flesh to God, it is brought to pass by the judgment of God, that by it he is more fully tormented in the fire. Here then he has no mind to leave it, and yet is severed from it, and there he wishes to leave it, and yet is kept in it for punishments. And so for the increase of his torments, he is at once both removed out of xxx. Rom. 8, 9.

Job 20, 27. Lit. the body here against his will, and held fast in the body there when he would not. Therefore because his spirit in torment longs[f] to get rid of the flesh, which it set before itself in loving amiss, and has not the power, it is rightly said here, *being left in his tabernacle it shall go ill with him.* Of whose accusing it is directly said;

Ver. 27. *The heavens shall reveal his iniquity; and the earth shall rise up against him.*

xxxi. 37. What do we understand by 'the heavens,' but the righteous, and what by 'the earth,' but sinners? And hence in the Lord's prayer we pray; *Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven*, meaning this, that the will of our Creator, in the same way as it is accomplished in all the righteous, may also be fulfilled in all sinners as well. Moreover of the Ps.19,1. righteous it is said, *The heavens declare the glory of God.* And to man when he sinned the sentence is pronounced, *Earth thou art, and unto earth thou shalt return.* And so of this ungodly man, when dragged to that awful judgment; 'the heavens reveal his iniquity, and the earth rises up against him,' that that man, who here never spared either the good or the bad, should in that tremendous inquest have the life of the righteous and of sinners alike accusing him. And of the two indeed it is worse if a man injure the good rather Ez.24,7. than sinners; and hence it is said by the Prophet, *For her blood is in the midst of her: she poured it upon the smoothest rock*[g]*; she poured it not upon the ground to cover it with dust:* by 'the ground' and 'the dust' indeed denoting sinners, but by the 'very smooth rock,' the righteous man, who is not made rough by the hard grazes of sins; and so 'the blood is poured upon the very smooth rock,' when the wickedness of a bloodthirsty mind rages in the afflicting of the righteous soul. While then it is worse unjustly to distress the righteous than the unrighteous, yet it is much worse to hurt the righteous and unrighteous together; and therefore whereas the wicked have injured both the good and the bad alike, in the accusing to damnation, 'the heavens shall reveal his iniquity, and the earth shall rise up against him, because he at one and the same time set himself against

[f] So A.B.C.D.—Ben. 'shall long.' λιμωττείαν Sept.
[g] 'Super limpidissimam petram' V.

those who savoured the things of heaven, and oppressed those who savoured of things below. But it may be that by 'the earth' we have denoted not the sinful and reprobate, but those that being busied in earthly courses, by the help of alms and of tears attain to eternal life. Concerning whom it is said by the Psalmist, when the Lord is proclaimed as coming to Judgment, *He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth that He may judge His people.* For He 'calls the heavens from above,' when they, who, leaving all that they had, held on the tenour of the heavenly life, are called to sit with Him in judgment, and come with Him as judges; but 'the earth is called from above,' when they who were tied down to earthly courses of action, yet sought therein for heavenly more than for earthly profit and advantage, to which persons it is said, *I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me.* So 'the heaven reveals the wickedness' of the hypocrite, and 'the earth rises up against him,' in that both they who come in company with God as judges, and they who through the ordeal of the Judgment are set free, become the witnesses of his iniquity. Thus nought of the things he has committed is hidden from sight in the time of condemnation, and if indeed many of his deeds are now concealed from his fellow-creatures by double-dealing, yet in the day of condemnation, whatever there was that lay hidden within him, it is brought to light. Hence it is fitly added;

Book XV.

Ps.50,4.

Ver. 28. *The shoot of his house shall be disclosed, and he shall be taken away in the day of God's wrath.*

38. 'The shoot of his house is disclosed,' when every thing bad that sprung up in his consciousness is shewn to view. For now the 'shoot of the hypocrite's house' remains hidden from sight, in that though his practice appears good in the delineation, yet the intent lies hidden. Since it is one thing what he does, and another thing what he has in view. But when, at the coming of the Judge, each man's conscience shall be brought forward for its testimony, (whence it is written, *Their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another,*) then the 'shoot of the hypocrite's house is herein disclosed,' because the evil design is laid bare in his heart. 'And he shall be taken away in the day

xxxii.

Rom. 2, 15.

Job 21, 4. 5. Lit. to themselves, whom they made quit of the sin of silence. And so let blessed Job, that he might serve both himself and his hearers, speak the words; *Hear I pray you my speech, and practise repentance.* But that he may discharge himself of the obligation which he owes, even if he is unable to avail his hearers, he adds, *Suffer me that I speak; and after my words, if it shall seem so, laugh.* I observe that whereas he added, *and practise repentance,* he first premised, *Hear,* but when he added the words, *and after my words, if it shall seem so, laugh,* he premised, *Suffer me that I may speak;* for 'hearing' is of one who acts of free will, but 'bearing' of one who acts against his own inclination. And so if his friends desire to be taught, let them 'hear,' but if they are ready to mock, let them 'suffer' the things that are said; seeing that to a proud mind, instruction in humility is a grievous and onerous weight. It goes on;

Ver. 4. *As for me, is my dispute against man, that I should not be justly sad?*

xxxvi. 42. Whosoever in pleasing God displeases man, has no grounds for sadness. But he, who in pleasing man displeases God, or thinks that he displeases both God and man together, if sadness does not come upon him, proves a stranger to the excellency of wisdom. Now blessed Job believed that he had displeased God in the midst of his strokes, and therefore he called back his mind to sadness, in that He was not to be disregarded, Whom he was afraid that he had displeased. Now, if he had been pleading against man concerning the merits of his life, he would have had no occasion to feel sadness, but seeing that by his present strokes he was made doubtful of his past life, he justly sought for sadness under the scourge. Hence too it is added;

Ver. 5. *Mark me, and be astonished.*

xxxvii. 43. i. e. Consider what I have done, and be astonished at the things that I undergo under this infliction of the rod. And he yet further rightly introduces the words;

And lay your finger upon your mouth.

As if he had said in plain speech; 'Knowing the good things that I have done and seeing the ills that I am subjected to, your own selves keep even from offence in words, and in my strokes dread your own hurts.' Or indeed seeing that

by our fingers we distinguish things severally, discretion is not unfitly represented by the fingers; and hence it is said by the Psalmist, *Blessed be the Lord my God, Which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight;* i. e. by the 'hands' denoting practice, and by the 'fingers,' discretion. And so the finger is laid to the mouth, when the tongue is bridled by discretion, that by what it utters, it may not fall into the sin of foolishness. And therefore he says, *Lay your finger upon your mouth;* i. e. 'join the virtue of discretion to your speech, that in those things which ye say right against the hypocrite, ye may see to what persons they are proper to be said.' It goes on; Book XV. Ps. 144, 1.

Ver. 6. *Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold of my flesh.*

44. That blessed Job was not forgetful of his deeds, the last utterance of his lips proves. Wherefore this which he now says to his friends, *Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold of my flesh*, must clearly be said in mockery. As if it were in plain words; 'If I remember that I have had any thing of the hypocrite in me, directly I tremble in tears of penitence.' And 'if he remembered, his flesh was shaken with trembling' he declares, i. e. that the weakness of practice was disheartened by the dread of vengeance. But as Zophar said many things about the sudden condemnation of the wicked man, whereby he snapped at the powerful estate of blessed Job, the holy man subjoins in answer to his words, saying, xxxviii.

Ver. 7. *Wherefore do the wicked live, are lifted up, and strengthened by riches?*

45. For except the patience of God bore with them, they would never live long in their sins. For they are 'lifted up by riches,' when they first begin to be powerful, but they are 'strengthened,' when they are permitted to continue long in this life. Since those whose substance uplifts them, length of days strengthens in the pride of their power. Or surely they are said to be lifted up and strengthened, in that they are 'lifted up' by honours, 'strengthened' by substance. But there are very many, who while they are both 'lifted up' by honours and 'strengthened' by riches, are vouchsafed the things which they covet in this life, but deprived of the xxxix.

Job 21, 8—10. Lit. succession of children. To these their very power is punishment, when they see themselves possessed of a large inheritance, but not possessed of heirs to whom they may leave it. What good then, if every thing be forthcoming, but children be wanting who may become their heirs? It proceeds;

Ver. 8. *Their seed is established in their sight with them.*

xl. 46. For the increase of exceeding happiness, together with a large patrimony, they have heirs too given them; and that no unavoidable temporal circumstance either may remove from their eyes those in whom their soul delights, it is said of this seed of theirs, *Their seed is established in their sight*. But what if children are vouchsafed, yet the children themselves stricken with barrenness? The family is made extinct in them, in like sort as it was feared it would be made extinct by the barrenness of their parents. It goes on;

And a crowd of kinsfolk and grandchildren before their eyes.

Observe, life is theirs, honours and riches are theirs, children are theirs, grandchildren are theirs. What if any secret fancy gall the mind, and domestic discord pierce the joys of their security? What is the prosperity of this world, if it be not joyful? It goes on;

Ver. 9. *Their houses are secure and at peace, neither is the rod of God upon them.*

xli. 47. Their 'houses are secure and at peace,' in that they live on committing sin, they do things to be mourned over, and they never leave their joys. And the 'rod' of discipline from Above 'does not smite them,' and they go on the more unrestrainedly in sin, in proportion as they are punished less for sin. But as we have heard the things, which go prosperously within, what prosperity smiles on them in the field too, let us see. It goes on;

Ver. 10. *Their ox conceiveth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and loseth not her calf.*

1 'bos' It is the usage of common talk to call 'ox[1]' masculine, and 'cow' feminine, but literary phraseology designates 'ox' of the common gender. Hence it is now said, *Their ox conceiveth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and loseth not her calf.* For to the owner of flocks, the first good fortune is

that the flocks being free from barrenness conceive, next that the conception come to the birth, and the third that the thing which is produced be by nourishment reared to a growth. And so in order to shew that the wicked had them all together, blessed Job declares that 'their flocks had conceived and not miscarried, that they had brought forth and were not deprived of their own offspring.' But it is inferior good fortune, if whilst the flocks increase, the keepers of them do not thrive at the same time. And hence to the fruitfulness of the flocks we have the fruitfulness of their household[1] made to succeed immediately. For it is said,

[1] 'familiæ'

Ver. 11. *Their little ones go forth like flocks, and their children revel in sports.*

xlii. 48. That as there are greater stores bestowed on them to have the possession of, so great numbers may spring up to keep them safe. But whereas he said, *revel in sports*, lest we should imagine that the mere sport of the children in the house of the wicked by itself was too mean and poor, he adds, saying;

Ver. 12. *They take the timbrel, and harp, and rejoice at the noise of the organ.*

As if he said in plain speech; 'Whilst the masters swell with honours and substance, the dependants rejoice in festive sports.' But, O blessed man, wherefore dost thou tell us all these many things of the delights of the wicked? It is now a long time that thou runnest on in the description of them; after much said, in one word point out what thou thinkest. It goes on;

Ver. 13. *They spend their days in wealth, and in a point of time go down to the lower parts.*

xliii. 49. Yes, O blessed man, thou hadst for long dilated on their joys, how dost thou now declare that 'in a point of time they go down to the lower parts,' saying that all length of time of the present life is then known to be but a 'point,' when it is cut short by the end? For when a person is brought to the last end, he no longer keeps aught of the past, seeing that all the periods of time have elapsed, he has nought in the future, in that there remain not to him the moments of a single hour. So the life, which could be thus narrowed, was but a 'point' of time. For as we have before said, we set

Job 21, 14. Lit. down the style in a point, and lift it up; and so he as it were touched life by a point who received and lost it. By a 'point' it is possible that this also may be understood, that it often happens that they that were long borne with in wickedness, are seized by sudden death, that it should not even be granted them to bewail before death the things they have done wrong, but seeing that occasionally the life of the righteous also is cut short by a sudden end, we shall understand it better, if we take the words of their temporal life, in that whatever was capable of passing away was sudden. But the friends of blessed Job, who believed him to be unrighteous on this account that they saw him afflicted with scourges, rightly have the truth shewn them by the voice of that holy man concerning the blooming and ruin of the wicked, in that prosperity in the present life is no witness to innocency, since many are brought back to everlasting life by scourges, and very many die without a scourge to be dragged to infinite woes. Of whom it is yet further added;

Ver. 14. *Who say unto God, Depart from us.*

xliv. 50. To say this in words even foolish men have not the boldness, yet all wicked persons say to God, not by their words but by their ways, *Depart from us.* For they that do those things which Almighty God forbids, what else are they doing but shutting up their soul against the Almighty. For just as to think of His precepts, is to introduce Him into one's self, so to resist His commandments is to keep Him away from the dwelling-place of the heart. And so they say, *Depart from us*, who refuse to yield Him an approach to them; and assail Him with wicked deeds, even if they seem to praise Him in words. Moreover they say;

For we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.

xlv. 51. And that by this alone, that they are too indifferent to acquire the knowledge of Him. For there be some who Luke 12, 47. 48. from this that 'Truth' saith; *And that servant, which knoweth not his Lord's will, and doth things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few. But he that knoweth his Lord's will, and did not according to it, shall be beaten with many;* choose not to know what they should do, and reckon as if they will be beaten less, if they are ignorant of what they ought to have put in practice. Yet it is one thing not to

have known, and another thing not to have chosen to know. For he knoweth not, who is willing to make the acquisition, but is not able. But he who, that he may not know, turns away his ear from the voice of truth, such a person is brought in, not one in ignorance, but a despiser. Now 'the way' of God is peace, 'the way' of God is humility, 'the way' of God is patience. But whilst the wicked disregard all these, they say, *We desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.* For whilst they are big with pride in this life, whilst they are swollen with honours, whilst, even if they have not, they covet, they slight 'the ways' of God in the thoughts of their hearts. For because God's way in this world was humility, this very Lord and God, the Redeemer of us men, came to reproaches, to mockery, to the Passion; and He underwent the adverse treatment of this world with patience, resolutely eschewed its good fortune, that He might both teach the prosperity of the eternal life to be aimed at, and the adversities of the present life not to be dreaded. But because the wicked covet the glory of the present life, and eschew disgrace, they are described as saying, *We desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.* For they are unwilling to know, what they scorn to do. Whose words are further continued, where it is said;

Book XV.

Ver. 15. *Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him?*

52. For the mind of man being miserably discharged without, is so dissipated in things corporeal, as neither to return to itself within, nor to be able to think of Him, Who is invisible. Thus carnal men setting at nought spiritual commands, because they do not see God with bodily sight, one time or another come to this pass, that they even imagine Him not to be. Hence it is written, *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.* Whence also it is said now, *Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him?* For it very often happens that men make it more their aim to serve their fellow-creatures, whom they see with bodily sight, than to serve God, Whom they do not see. For in all that they do, they stretch towards the reach of their eyes, and because they cannot stretch the eyes of the body to God, they either scorn to pay Him homage, or if they begin they grow wearied. For, as has been said, they do not be-

xlvi.

Ps.14,1.

Job 21, 15. Lit. lieve Him to be, Whom they do not behold with bodily sight. These, did they but seek God the Author of all things in a spirit of humility, would in themselves experience that a thing which is not seen is better than an object which is seen. For they themselves subsist in being by virtue of an invisible soul and a visible body; but if that which is not seen be withdrawn from them, at once that perishes which is seen. And the eyes of the body indeed are open, but they cannot see or perceive any thing. For the sense of sight is gone, because the indweller has quitted, and the house of the flesh remains empty, since that invisible spirit has departed which was wont to look through its windows. Therefore that invisible things are better than visible ones, all carnal persons ought severally to conclude from themselves, and by this ladder of reflection (so to speak) to mount towards God, seeing that He is even herein that He continues invisible, and continues supreme in proportion as He can never be comprehended. But there are some, who do not doubt either that God is, or that He is incomprehensible, who notwithstanding seek from Him not Himself, but His external gifts. And when they see that these are wanting to those that obey Him, they scorn to obey Him themselves. In relation to whose words it is further added;

And what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?

xlvii. 53. When, in praying, God is not the object we seek, the mind is soon wearied in praying, in that when a man asks those things, which it may be that God of His secret counsel refuses to bestow, He is Himself brought into loathing, Who will not give the thing which is loved. Now the Lord desires that He may be loved Himself, more than the things which He has made, and that things eternal should be rather prayed for than temporal ones; as it is written, *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.* For in that He saith not, 'shall be given,' but *shall be added unto you*, he plainly shews that what is given as principal is one thing, and what is added over and above, another. For whereas to us the eternal world ought to be in the thought and intent, but the world of time in the use, both the one is 'given' and the

Matt. 6, 33.

other 'added' over and above in superabundance. And yet it very often happens, that when men pray for temporal good things, but do not look for eternal rewards, they seek the thing that is added, and do not want that whereunto it should be added. Nor do they reckon it to be the worth of their prayer, if here they be poor in things temporal, and there live for everlasting rich in blessedness; but having their eyes fixed on visible things alone, as has been said, they refuse to purchase for themselves the invisible by the labour of beseeching it. Who if they but sought objects above, would ply their labour already with fruit, in that when the mind, employed in prayers, pants after the form and fashion[1] of its Maker, burning with divine longings, it is united to that which is above, disjoined from that below, opens itself in the affection of its fervent passion, that it may take in, and while taking in kindles itself: merely to love things above is already to mount on high; and whilst with longing desire, the soul is agape after heavenly objects, in a marvellous way it tastes the very thing it longs to get. It goes on; Book XV.

[1] speciem

Ver. 16. *But because their good things are not in their hand, may their counsel be far from me.*

54. He 'holds his good things in his hand,' who in despising temporal things, forces them under the dominion of the mind. For whoever loves them over much, subjects himself more to them, than them to himself. For many of the righteous were rich in this world; sustained by their substance, and by their honour, they seemed to possess many things; yet forasmuch as their mind was not possessed by the excessive enjoyment of these things, which were theirs, 'their good things were in their hand,' because they were held subordinate to the authority of the soul. But on the other hand the wicked so discharge themselves with all their hearts in aims at outward things, that they do not themselves so much hold the things possessed, but are holden with minds in bondage by the things they possess. Therefore because 'their good things are not in their hand,' it is rightly added, *let their counsel be far from me.* For what is 'the counsel of the wicked,' saving to seek earthly and neglect eternal glory, to aim at temporal well-being at the cost of interior detriment, and to change away transitory xlviii.

Job 21, 16. 17. Lit. sorrows for eternal woes? Let the holy man, then, regarding these aims of the wicked, turn from them and say, *Let their counsel be far from me.* Because he sees it to be good beyond comparison, as it is, he had rather for a brief space groan here beneath the rod, than undergo the woes of eternal vengeance. But not even in this life do they, that are bent to make their way prosperous therein, enjoy an uninterrupted course of prosperity. But many times their joys are broken off by groans arising. Whence it is added;

Ver. 17. *How often shall their candle be put out? and how oft shall a flood come over them, and shall He divide sorrows in His fury?*

xlix. 55. It often happens that the wicked man reckons the life of his children as a 'candle,' but when the son, that is loved overmuch, is taken away, what seemed the 'light' of the wicked is 'put out.' Often the wicked man reckons the credit of present honour his 'candle,' but, whilst, his dignity gone, he is cast down from his height, his candle is extinguished, which shone for him according to his desire. Often the wicked man thinks that the resources of earthly substance are his, like a great candle for light, but when upon ruin falling on him, he loses the riches which he loved more than himself, what else with this man but that he has lost the candle, in the light of which he was rejoicing? And so he that has no wish to rest his joy on the things of Eternity, neither here, where he is minded to establish himself, can he rejoice uninterruptedly. For as often as the 'candle of the wicked is put out,' at once there 'cometh a flood upon them, and God divideth sorrows in His fury.' 'A flood cometh' upon the wicked when they undergo the waves of sorrow from adversity of some kind. For Almighty God, when He sees Himself contemned, and that delight is taken in earthly concupiscence, smites that with woes which He sees is preferred before Himself in the thoughts of the wicked man. Now it is well said, *And divideth sorrows in His fury.* For He That reserves eternal woes for the wicked man in retribution, and sometimes smites through his soul even here with temporal woe, because both here and there too He smites, 'divideth sorrows in His fury' upon the

head of the ungodly. For neither does present punishment, which does not turn the mind of the wicked man from his bad desires, set him free from eternal chastisements. And hence it is said by the Psalmist, *Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and blasts of storms; this shall be a portion of their cup.* In mentioning 'snares, fire, and brimstone, and blasts of storms,' he introduced indeed a multitude of woes; but because the sinner that is not amended by them is called to eternal punishments, he consequently called these woes no more his whole cup, but 'a portion of his cup,' seeing that their suffering is begun indeed here in woes, but is consummated in everlasting vengeance. Concerning whose end it is yet further added; Book XV. Ps.11,6.

Ver. 18. *They shall be as chaff before the wind, and as ashes that the storm scattereth.*

56. When the wicked man is seen in power, when he is utterly without check or restraint in his acts of oppression and violence, by the imaginations of the weak he is accounted too well ballasted, and as rooted in this world. But when the sentence of the strict Judge cometh, 'all the wicked shall be as chaff before the wind,' because, if I may say so, all they are by the sudden blast of wrath lifted and carried to the fire, whom here once in their hasty judgments the tears of the distressed were as unable to move as a superincumbent mass of a stubborn weight. And to the hands of griping Judgment those are light, who by injustice were heavy upon their neighbours. *And as ashes that the storm scattereth.* Before the eyes of Almighty God, the life of the wicked man is ashes, in that though he appear green for a moment, yet is he already seen consumed by His judgment, seeing that he is set aside for everlasting burning. These ashes the storm disperses, in that, *God shall come in state, even our God, and shall not keep silence. A fire shall devour before Him, and there shall be a mighty tempest round about Him.* For by the furiousness of this tempest the wicked are carried away from the sight of the eternal Judge. And those that here had set their mind firm with evil desire, will then appear but 'chaff' and 'ashes,' because those persons the storm seizes and transports to eternal punishment. It goes on; l. Ps.50,3.

Job. 21, 19. Lit. li.

Ver. 19. *God shall lay up for his children the grief of their father. And when He repayeth, then he shall know it.*

57. We know that it is written; *Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children unto the third and fourth generation.* And again it is written, *What mean ye that ye make this a proverb among you concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord, ye shall not have this for a proverb any more in Israel. Behold all souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.* Thus in these two sentences whereas there is found a dissimilar meaning, the mind of the hearer is instructed, that it should search out with minute care the way of discernment. Since original sin we derive from our parents, and, except by the grace of Baptism we be loosed from it, we bear with us the sins of our very parents, seeing that surely we are still one with them. And so 'He visiteth the iniquity of the fathers upon the children,' when on account of the guilt of the parent, the soul of the offspring is polluted by original sin. And again He does not 'visit the sins of the fathers upon the children,' in that when we are freed from original guilt by Baptism, we no longer own the sins of our fathers, but those which we have ourselves been guilty of. Which however may be understood in another way as well, in that whosoever imitates the wicked ways of a bad father, is bound in his sins also. But whosoever does not follow the wickedness of his parent, is never burthened by his offence. And hence it comes to pass that the bad son of a bad father not only pays for his own sins, which he has added, but the sins of his father as well; seeing that to the evil practices of his father, which he is not ignorant that the Lord is angry with, he is not afraid to add yet further his own wickedness too. And it is meet that he who being liable to a strict Judge does not fear to follow the ways of a wicked parent, should be compelled in this present life to pay for even his parent's misdeeds. And hence it is there said, *The soul of the father is Mine, and the soul of the son is Mine: the soul that sinneth, it*

Ex. 34, 7.

Ezek. 18, 2-4.

shall die, because in the flesh by the sin of the father the sons too are sometimes ruined. But now that original sin has been done away, they are not bound in the soul by the parent's wickedness. For how is it that little children are very often seized by devils, saving that the flesh of the son is mulcted in punishment of the father? For the bad father is stricken in his own person, and is too stubborn to feel the force of the blow. Very often he is stricken in his children, so as to be more sharply stung, and the sorrow of the father is rendered to the flesh of the children, to the end that the evil heart of the parent may be chastened by inflictions on the children. But when not little children, but such as are now more advanced in years, are stricken by the parent's sin, what else are we given clearly to understand, but that they likewise pay the penalties of those whose deeds they have imitated? And hence it is rightly said, *Even unto the third and fourth generation.* For whereas it is possible that 'even to the third and fourth generation,' children may witness the life of their father, which they copy, vengeance extends even to them, who witnessed what they might mischievously imitate.

58. And because sin shuts the eyes of the ungodly, but punishment opens them wide at the last, it is rightly subjoined; *And when He repayeth, then he shall know it.* For the ungodly man knows not the evil things he has done, except when he has already begun to be punished for those same evil deeds. Hence it is said by the Prophet; *And the vexation alone shall give understanding to the hearing.* For he then 'understands' what he has heard, when he now grieves that he is 'vexed' for the neglect of it. Hence it is said by Balaam concerning himself; *the man whose eye is shut hath said: He hath said which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, which shall fall, and so his eyes shall be opened.* For he gave counsel against the children of Israel, but he saw afterwards in punishment what it was he had been guilty of before in sin. Now the Elect, forasmuch as they see beforehand so that they should not sin, the eyes of these surely are open before their fall. But the wicked man opens his eyes after his fall, because after his sin he now in his own punishment sees that he ought to have avoided that ill which he did. Concerning the know- Numb. 24, 3. 4.

Job 21, 20. 21. Lit. ledge of which man, at that time useless from henceforth, the words are next introduced;

Ver. 20. *His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.*

lii. 59. This man, if whilst placed in this life he had been willing to open his eyes to his sin, would not hereafter 'drink of the wrath of the Almighty.' But he that here turns away his eyes from the sight of his guilt, cannot there avoid the sentence of condemnation. But often those that do not fear eternal punishments, at all events on account of temporal chastening are afraid to do what is bad. But there are some that have become so hardened in wickedness that they do not fear to be stricken even in the very things that they love, if only they can accomplish what they have iniquitously planned. Hence it is here added concerning the obduracy of the wicked man,

Ver. 21. *For what doth it concern him about his house after him? or if the number of his months be halved?*

liii. 60. Not that we ought so to understand it as that this wicked one, after he is condemned to everlasting punishment, shall never think of 'his house,' i. e. of his relations, whom he has left; since 'Truth' tells us by His own lips, Luke 16, 28. that the rich man, who was buried in hell, even in the midst of punishment had care and concern touching his five brethren, whom he had left. For every sinner will turn wise in punishment, who continued foolish in sin, because being now wrung with anguish there, he opens his eyes to reason, which here being devoted to pleasure he kept shut; and under the torturing of punishment it is forced from him to learn wisdom, who here by pride blinding him made himself foolish. Which person, however, his wisdom will then no longer avail, in that here, where he ought to have acted after the dictates of wisdom, he lost the opportunity. For he covets as the sovereign good here to have progeny of his race, to fill his house with servants and with substance, and to live long in this corrupt condition of the flesh. But if perchance any thing has come into his wishes, which however he cannot obtain except with the offending of his Creator, his mind is disturbed for a while, and he considers that, if he does aught here to incur his Creator's being offended, he is

smitten in his house, children, life. But prompted by his pride, he directly hardens himself, and whatever infliction he may feel in his house, or whatever infliction in his life, he minds it nothing, so long as he can accomplish the things he has projected, and whilst he lives, he never ceases to compass his pleasures. For see, his house is struck on account of sin; but *what does it concern him about his house after him?* See, for the avenging of his evil doing, the length of life, which he might have had, is shortened; but *what does it concern him if the number of his months be cut off in the midst?* Even in that thing therefore the sinner sets himself stiffly against God, in which Almighty God breaks in pieces his stiffness; and not even the smiting inflicted brings down the mind, which stubbornness on deliberation hardens in resistance to God. And observe how heavy the heinousness of the sin, at once to set before the mind punishment for sin, and yet not even from fear of torment to bend the neck of the heart beneath the yoke of our Maker! But see, when we hear these things said, the question occurs to our mind, why the Almighty and Merciful God permitted the faculty of reason in the human mind to fall into such blindness? But lest any one presume to sift beyond what he ought the hidden judgments of God, it is rightly added; Book XV.

Ver. 22. *Shall any teach God knowledge? seeing that He judgeth those that are high.*

61. When in the things, which are done concerning us, we have doubts, we ought to look at others, which are well known to us, and to pacify that murmuring of the thought, which had arisen to us in consequence of our uncertainty. For see, whereas scourges recover the Elect to life, and not even scourges keep the wicked from bad deeds, Almighty God's judgments upon us are very secret and are not unjust. But if we stretch the eye of our mind to the things above, we see by those that touching ourselves we have nought to complain of with justice. For Almighty God discerning the merits of Angels, ordained some to abide in eternal light without falling, others, fallen of free will from the standing of their loftiness, He laid low in the vengeance of eternal damnation. By us, then, He doth nothing unjustly, Who judged justly even a nature more refined than ours. So let him say; *Shall* liv.

Job 21. 23—28. *any teach God knowledge? seeing that He judgeth those that are high.* For He that doeth wonderful things above our level, it is surely plain that touching ourselves He ordereth all things with knowledge. This then being set first, he adds, where it is the mind of man is wearied in making research. For it is added;

Ver. 23—25. *One dieth in his full strength, being rich and prosperous. His inwards are full of fatness, and his bones are moistened with marrow. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and hath never any wealth.*

lv. 62. These things being so, who may investigate the secrets of Almighty God, to find out wherefore He permits them so to be? Now to the Elect and the Lost, their life indeed is unlike, but the corruption of the flesh in death is no way unlike. Hence it is added;

Ver. 26. *And yet they shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.*

What wonder then if those persons for a moment run a course unlike in the prosperity and adversity of this world, who through the corruption of the flesh return alike to the earth? So that life alone is to be thought on, wherein together with the resurrection of the flesh there is the arrival at an unlike end of recompensing. For what is 'strength and ease' to the wicked, what 'marrow and riches,' seeing that all is left here in a moment, and There that retribution, which may never be left, is found? For as the mirth of this wicked one passes on to woe, so the woe of the innocent soul in affliction passes on to joy. So neither ought riches to lift up the soul, nor poverty to disturb it. Hence blessed Job in the midst of hurts in substance receives to the mind no hurts in thoughts; but to them that despise him under the infliction of the rod, he adds rebuking them, saying,

Ver. 27, 28. *Behold I know your thoughts, and the devices that ye wrongfully imagine against me. For ye say, Where is the house of the prince? and where are the dwellings of the wicked?*

lvi. 63. For they had imagined him a wicked man, whom they saw, his substance gone, in a temporal way ruined. But the holy man judges them with a lofty review in proportion as

amidst the losses which he had met with, he was standing with undiminished uprightness. For how had his losses of substance without hurt him, who had not lost That Being, Whom he loved within? BOOK XV.

64. But this that is said, *They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them*, if any one wish to take in the way of allegory, we may shortly accomplish[1] it, if what has been already said concerning this bad rich man, we repeat again. Thus it is said, *His inwards are full of fatness, and his bones are moistened with marrow.* For as 'fat' arises from much food, so does pride from abundance of goods, which fattens his mind in his riches, while his spirit is lifted up in his proud behaving. For the pride of the heart is like a kind of richness of fat. Whence, because very many commit sins from abundance, it is said by the Prophet, *Their iniquity has come out as it were from fatness.* It follows, *And his bones are moistened with marrow.* The lovers of this life have 'bones' as it were, when in this world they possess the strong stay of dignities. But if in the outward dignity there lack earthly private wealth, as to their judgment they have 'bones' indeed, but 'marrow' in the bones they have not. Whereas then that lover of this world is so stayed up by outward power that he is likewise at the same time stuffed to the full with the inward abundance of his earthly house, it is said, *And his bones are moistened with marrow.* Or otherwise the 'bones' of the rich man are bad and stubborn practices, but the 'marrow in the bones' are the mere desires of bad living alone, which not even in the satisfying of wickedness are filled to the full. Which marrow as it were moistens the bones, when bad desires keep on their evil habits in the gratification of pleasures. ALLEG. [1] see cap. xvi. of this Book. v. 30. Ps. 73, 7.

65. And there are some that in this world have not riches, but long to have, and seek to be exalted, though in this world they are unable to get the thing they desire, and whilst they have no substance or dignity to support them, yet by bad desires conscience declares them guilty in the sight of the interior Judge. For every such person is very often in this accounted distressed, because he cannot be rich and carry himself proudly. Concerning whom it is also added,

Job 21, 27. 28. ALLEG. *And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and without any wealth.* Observe from the same cause whence the rich man emptily rejoices with a proud heart, another that is poor more emptily sorrows with a proud heart. Now it is rightly added concerning both, *And yet they shall lie down together in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.* For to 'lie down in the dust' is to close the eyes of the mind in earthly desires; hence it is said to every individual living in Eph. 5, 14. sin, and lying asleep in his wickedness, *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.* But the 'worms' that spring from the flesh cover them alike, in that carnal cares overlay the mind whether of the rich man or of the poor man carrying himself proudly. For in the things of earth the poor and the rich children of perdition, though they be not sustained by a like share of prosperity, are yet troubled by a like degree of solicitude, in that what the one already possesses with alarm the other longs for with anxiety, and because he is unable to get it he is grieved. So let it be said; *They shall lie down together in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.* In that though they be not alike lifted up by temporal good things, yet in care of temporal good things they are both alike lulled asleep by insensibility of mind. *And the worms cover them together*, because whether this one, that he may possess what is coveted, or that one, that he may not lose what is possessed, carnal thoughts overlay both.

LIT. 66. But blessed Job, who neither when he had substance was elated, nor when it was taken from him sought it with anxiety, as he was devoured by no thoughts of outward loss, had no 'worms of the heart covering him;' and because he had not sunk his mind in earthly care, he did not 'lie asleep in the dust.' It goes on; *Behold I know your thoughts, and* 1 Cor. 2, 11. *your wrongful sentences against me.* As it is written, *For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?* on what principle is it said here, *Behold I know your thoughts?* But the spirit of a man is then unknown to another, when it is not shewn forth either Matt. 7, 20. by words or deeds. For whereas it is written, *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them;* it is by the thing that is done outwardly that whatever lies concealed within is

brought to sight. Whence too it is rightly said by Solomon, *As in water the faces of beholders shine bright, so the hearts of men are plain to the wise.* Again blessed Job, when he declared that he knew the thoughts of his friends who were talking with him, thereupon added, *and your unjust sentences against me:* that by a thing open to view he might shew he had found out that which lay concealed in them. Hence he adds their very wicked sentences themselves as well, saying, *For ye say, Where is the house of the prince? and where are the dwelling-places of the wicked?* Book XV. Prov. 27, 19.

67. The weak, that desire to thrive in this world's fortune, and as evils of great magnitude so dread scourges, in the case of those, whom they see smitten, measure offence by the punishment; for those, whom they see struck with the rod, they suppose have displeased God. Hence blessed Job's friends were persuaded that he, whom they be held under the rod, had been ungodly, i. e. as reckoning that if he had not been ungodly, his 'dwelling-places would have remained:' but no man thinks so, saving he who still travails with the weariness of infirmity, who sets fast the footstep of his thoughts in the gratification of the present life, who is not taught to pass on with perfect desires to the eternal land. Hence it is well added;

Ver. 29, 30. *Ask every one of them that go by the way; and ye will know that he understands this same. Because the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction, and he is brought to the day of wrath.*

68. For often the patience of God bears for long with those, whom it already condemns to punishments foreknown; it suffers those to go on thriving, whom it sees still committing worse things. For whereas He sees to what pit of condemnation they are going on, He esteems to be as nothing to them, that the wicked multiply here things which must be abandoned. But he that is wedded to the glory of the present life, counts it great happiness to thrive here according to his wish, though he be driven hereafter to undergo eternal punishment. Therefore that man only sees it to be nothing for the wicked man to thrive, who has already removed the step of his heart from the love of the present world. Hence, in speaking of the after condemnation lvii.

Job 21, 29. 30. Moral. of the wicked man, it is rightly premised, *Ask any one of the wayfarers, and ye shall know that he understandeth these same things.* For he is called a 'wayfarer,' who minds that the present life is to him a way and not a native land, who thinks it beneath him to fix his heart on the love of this passing state of being, who longs, not to continue in a transitory scene of things, but to reach the eternal world. For he that does not aim to be a wayfarer in this world, is far from setting at nought this world's good fortune, and when he sees those things which he himself covets abounding to others, he wonders. Hence the Prophet David, as he had already passed in heart from the love of the present world, Ps. 37, 35. 36. in describing the glory of the wicked man, said; *I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading like a green bay tree.* But because he did not submit his heart to this world, he justly looked down upon him, saying, *I passed on, but, lo, he was not.* For the wicked man would have been something in his esteem, if he had not himself passed on in the bent of his mind from this present scene. But this man, who[1] to one not 'passing by' would have been something great, to one 'passing by' in mind, how little he was, was shewn; in that whilst everlasting retribution is thought on, it is seen how little present glory is. Hence Moses, when he was seeking the glory of heavenly contemplation, said, Exod. 3, 3. *I will now pass on, and see this great sight.* For except he had withdrawn the footstep of the heart from the love of the world, he would never have been able to understand things above. Hence Jeremiah entreating for the sorrow Lam. 1, 12. of his heart to be taken thought on, saith, *All ye that pass by, Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow!* For they who do not pass through the present life like a way, but think on it as their country, are unskilled to take in with the mind's eye the sorrow of heart of the Elect. These persons therefore the Prophet looks out, that they may view his sorrow, whose it was not to have set fast their mind in this world. Hence it is said by Solomon, *Open thy mouth for the dumb, and in the cause of all such as are passing by.* For those are called 'the dumb,' who never set themselves against the Preacher's words by gainsaying them; who are also persons 'passing by,' in that they disdain to fix

[1] Oxf. Mss. read 'qui.'

the bent of their mind in the love of the present life. Therefore that the bad man is being 'reserved for the day of perdition,' and 'brought to the day of fury,' this thing there is none but he who is 'a wayfarer' that understandeth, in that he that has set his heart in the present scene of things does not find out the punishments that follow the wicked man. Of whom it is still further added;

Ver. 31. *Who shall reprove his way to his face? and who shall repay him what he hath done?*

lviii. 69. Often that wrath of God, which the wicked man is to suffer for ever, even while placed in this life too he is made to experience, whilst he loses the good fortune that he loves, and meets with the adversity that he dreads. And though even in prosperity he may be rebuked for his wickednesses by the tongue of the righteous, yet we know that it is when his evil deeds bring the bad man to the earth, that the reproof of the righteous gains force. But in what sense is it now said, *Who shall reprove his way to his face?* seeing that the righteous even holding their peace this too is well known, that so often is 'the way of the wicked man reproved to his face' here, as often as his prosperity is disturbed by adversity intervening. But blessed Job, while he was speaking of the body of all the wicked, suddenly turns his words to the head of all the wicked. For he saw that at the end of the world Satan entering into the man, whom Holy Scripture calls Antichrist, is lifted up with such exaltation, lords it with such power, is exalted with such wonderful signs and marvels in the exhibiting of holiness, that his deeds cannot be charged home to him by man, in that with the power of terribleness he likewise unites the signs of holiness which is exhibited, and he says, *Who shall reprove his way to his face?* 'Who,' that is to say, 'of mankind may dare to rebuke him? whose face does he dread to endure[1]? Yet not only Elijah and Enoch who are brought forward for the rebuking of him, but even all the Elect 'reprove his way to his face,' whilst they shew contempt, and whilst by excellence of mind they oppose his wickedness. But because this they do by divine grace and not by their own powers, it is rightly said now, *Who shall reprove his way before his face?* For 'who' is there save God, by whose aid the Elect are sup-

[1] or, 'the sight of whom he dreads.'

Job 21, 32. PROPH. ported to have power to withstand him? For sometimes in Holy Scripture, when in asking a question the word 'who' is put, the Almighty is denoted. Hence it is written, *Who shall raise him up?* Of Whom it is said by Paul, *Whom God raised from the dead.* In respect then that holy men oppose themselves to his wickedness, it is not themselves, that 'reprove his way,' but it is He, by Whose grace they are strengthened, and whereas his presence, wherewith he will come in man, will be much more dreadful in persecution than it is now, when he is not seen at all, in that he is not as yet preeminently borne by that special vessel of his, it is well said, *before his face.* For there are many now who judge and rebuke the ways of Antichrist, but this they do as it were in his absence, in that they rebuke him whom they do not as yet in a special manner see. But when he shall come in that damned man, whoever withstands his presence, 'reproves his way before his face,' the powers of whom he at once sees and sets at nought. Or surely, to 'reprove his way before his face' is to disturb the prosperity of his course by the interrupting of eternal punishment. Which thing because the Lord alone is to do by His own might, of Whom it is written, *Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming*, it is rightly said, *Who shall reprove his way before his face?* And hence the words follow, *And who shall repay him what he hath done?* Who, truly, save the Lord, Who alone shall 'repay that lost man what he hath done,' when by His coming He shall dash in pieces his exceeding mighty power with eternal damnation? But what this exalted prince of the wicked is about, as long as he is in this life, let us hear. It goes on;

Gen. 49, 9. Gal. 1, 1. 2 Thess. 2, 8.

Ver. 32. *He shall be brought to the graves, and in the heap of the dead bodies he shall watch.*

lix. 70. Whereas graves cover dead bodies, what else is denoted by 'the graves' but the lost, in whom their souls extinct of the life of blessedness lie as in graves? Thus this wicked one shall be 'brought to the graves,' in that he shall be admitted in the hearts of the wicked, in that they only admit him, in whom are found souls dead to God, concerning whom it is rightly said by the Prophet likewise where his

punishments are described, *His graves are about him, all the slain, and those that fell by the sword.* For they in hell ‘ are about him,’ in whom that evil spirit lies dead, which same fell, having been slain by the sword of his wickedness. Whence it is written, *Who hast delivered David Thy servant from the hurtful sword.* And it is rightly said, *in the heap of the dead bodies he shall watch,* in that now in the assembly of sinners he puts forth the artifices of his cunning. And on this account, that in the world there is a scarcity of good men, and a multitude of bad, it is rightly called ‘ the heap of dead bodies,’ that the very multitude of the wicked might be denoted. *For broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat.* So Satan’s ‘keeping watch in the heap of dead bodies,’ is his exercising the wiles of his wickedness in the hearts of the children of perdition. Of whom it is yet further added; Book XV. Mat. 7, 13.

Ver. 33. *He was sweet to the pebbles of Cocytus.*

71. ‘Cocytus’ in the Greek tongue is the term for ‘lamentation,’ which is used to be taken for the lamentation of women, or any persons going weakly. Now the wise of this world being shut out from the light of truth, endeavoured by making search to hold a kind of shadows of truth. Hence they thought that the river Cocytus ran amongst the dead below, clearly denoting that they that commit deeds worthy of painful inflictions, run to an end into hell unto lamentation. But for ourselves let us make little of the shadow of carnal wisdom, who now hold the light relating to the truth, and let us see that in the utterance of the holy man ‘Cocytus’ means the lamentation of the weak sort. For it is written, *Be of good courage, and let your heart be strengthened.* For they who refuse to be ‘strengthened’ in God, are going the way to lamentation through weakness of the mind. Now we are used to call by the name of pebbles the little stones of rivers, which the water in running away carries along with it. What then is denoted by the pebbles of Cocytus, but the lost, who, being devoted to their gratifications, are as it were ever being dragged by the river down to the lowest depth. For they that refuse to stand strong and stedfast against the pleasures of this life, become ‘ pebbles of Cocytus,’ who by their slippings day by day are going the way to lamentation, lx. Ps. 31, 24.

Job 21, 32. Prοph. that they may hereafter mourn for everlasting, who now indulgently give themselves a loose in their pleasures. And whereas our old enemy, having entered into his vessel, that son of perdition, whilst he bestows gifts on the wicked, whilst he exalts them with honours in this world, whilst he exhibits marvels to their eyes, has all drifting souls admiring and following him in his marvels, it is said well of him here, *He was sweet to the pebbles of Cocytus.* For whilst the Elect despise him, whilst they spurn him with the foot of the mind, those love while they follow him, who are as it were drawn by the water of pleasure to everlasting lamentation, who from earthly concupiscence roll down to the lowest depth like gravel, by slippings day by day. For to some he proffers the taste of his sweetness through pride, to others through avarice; to one set by envy, to another by deceitfulness, and to another by lust, and for all the kinds of evil that he forces men to, he presents to them so many draughts of his sweetness. For when he prompts any thing proud in the heart, the thing becomes sweet that he says, because the wicked man longs to appear advanced above the rest of the world. Whilst he strives to infuse avarice into the mind, that which he speaks in secret becomes sweet, because by abundance need is avoided. When he suggests any thing to do with envy, what he says is rendered sweet, in that when the froward mind sees another go off, it exults in not appearing at all inferior to him. When it prompts any thing to do with deceitfulness, what it says is made sweet, seeing that by this alone, that it deceives the rest of the world, it appears to itself to be wise. When it speaks lust to the seduced soul, what it recommends is rendered sweet, in that it dissolves the soul in pleasure. Therefore, for all the evil propensities that it insinuates into the hearts of carnal men, it as it were holds out to them so many draughts of its sweetness; which same sweetness, however, as I have before said, none receive save they, who being devoted to present gratifications, are drawn to everlasting lamentation. And so it is well said, *He was sweet to the pebbles of Cocytus;* seeing that he is bitter to the Elect and sweet to the lost. For them only does he feed with his delights, whom by daily slippings he is urging to lamentations. It goes on;

Ver. 33. *And he draweth every man after him, as there are innumerable before him.* Book XV.

72. In this place by 'man' is meant one whose taste is for things human. But whereas 'every one' is more than an 'innumerable' quantity, we have to enquire, wherefore he is said before him to draw an 'innumerable' quantity, and after him 'every man' saving that our old enemy, having then entered into the man of perdition, drags under the yoke of his sovereignty all the carnal ones that he finds; who even now before his appearing 'draws an innumerable quantity' indeed, yet not 'every one' of the carnal, in that there are many that are daily recalled to life from carnal practice, and some by a short, others by a long course of penitence return to the state of righteousness. And now he seizes on an 'innumerable quantity,' when he does not exhibit the miracles of his falseness for men to marvel at. But when he performs his prodigies before the eyes of the carnal for them to wonder at, he then draws after him not an 'innumerable quantity,' but 'every one,' in that they who delight themselves in present good things, submit themselves to his power without repeal. But as we before said, because it is more to 'draw every man' than an 'innumerable quantity,' wherefore is it first said that he draws every man, and afterwards in augmentation an innumerable quantity is added? For reason requires that first what is least should be spoken of, and afterwards in augmentation that which is more. Now we are to know that in this passage it was more to say, 'an innumerable quantity' than 'every man.' For he after him 'draws every man,' in that in three years and a half all that he may find busied in the pursuits of a carnal life he binds fast to the yoke of his dominion; but before him he draws an innumerable quantity, in that during the successive stages of five thousand years and more, though he could never succeed in drawing all the carnal, yet in so long a period the innumerable quantity whom he carries away before him, are many more in number than 'all' whom he finds to carry off in that so short time. And so it is well said, *And he draweth every man after him, also innumerable before him;* in that he both takes away less then, when he takes away 'every man,' and he gets a bigger booty now, when he assails the hearts of an 'innu- lxi.

Job 21, 33. Hist. merable quantity.' Whereas blessed Job then delivered these things excellently against the prince of the wicked, who is permitted to be exalted in this life, but will be destroyed in the coming of the Lord, touching himself he plainly shews that he received the scourges of the Lord not by his offending, since if the bad man is permitted to prosper in this life, it is necessary that the elect of God should be held fast under the reins of the scourge. From which circumstance he reproves his friends, saying,

How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing your answer is shewn to be against Truth?

lxii. 73. The friends of blessed Job could not console him, in whom they gainsaid the truth by their discourse, and when they called him a hypocrite or ungodly, hereby that they themselves by lying were guilty of sin, assuredly they augmented the chastisement of the righteous man chastened with wounds. For the minds of the Saints, because they love the truth, even the sin of another's deceit wrings. For in proportion as they see the guilt of falsehood to be grievous, they hate it not only in themselves, but in others also.

BOOK XVI.

After going through the twenty-second and twenty-third chapters of the Book of Job, and the twenty-fourth to the middle of verse twenty with a brief explanation, he brings the third Part to a close.

THOSE persons, who being opposed to the words of truth, get the worst in making out a case, often repeat even what is well known, lest by holding their tongue they should seem defeated. Hence Eliphaz, being pressed closely by the sayings of blessed Job, utters things which no one but is aware of. For he says, LIT.

Ver. 2. *Can a man be compared unto God, even when he has perfect knowledge?*

1. By comparison with God, our knowledge is ignorance, for it is by participation, and not by comparison, with God that we become imbued with wisdom. What wonder then when that is said, as if in the way of instruction, which might have been known, even if it had been kept silent? And yet further he subjoins the power of God as defending it. i.

Ver. 3. *Is it any profit to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it gain to Him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?*

2. For in all that we do well, we are doing good to ourselves and not to God. And hence by the Psalmist it is said, *O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my God, seeing that Thou needest not my goods.* For He is truly 'Lord' to us, because He is also assuredly 'God,' Who needs not the good in him that serveth Him, but bestows the goodness which He receives, so that the goodness which is offered up should avail not Himself, but those that first receive and afterwards render back. For though the Lord, when He cometh for Judgment, saith, *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me;* it is with extraordinary pitifulness that He says this, by sympathy with His members. And He the same Being ii. Ps.16,2. Mat.25, 40.

Job 22, 4—8. hereby, viz. that He is our Head, aids, Who by our good deeds in His members is aided. Yet further Eliphaz adds what there is no man but is aware of, saying,

Ver. 4. *Will He reprove thee for fear of thee? Will He enter with thee into judgment?*

iii. 3. Who that was out of his senses even would think this, that from fear the Lord reproves us, and from dread sets His judgment against us? But they who do not know how to mete their words, doubtless slip down to idle discourse. Wherein if they never at all take themselves to task, without delay they leap forth to words mischievous and insulting. Hence Eliphaz, who brought in idle words, immediately burst out into abusive ones, saying,

Ver. 5. *Is it not for thy wickedness that is great, and thine iniquities that are infinite?*

iv. 4. Observe how from a deadened heart he came to idle words, and from idle words in the heinousness of lying he blazed out into insults. For these are the descents of increasing sin, that the tongue when not restrained should never there where it has fallen lie still, but be always descending to what is worse; but these things that are subjoined, because they are very plain taken after the history, do not need to be set forth after the letter.

5. But whereas we have said that the friends of blessed Job bear the likeness of heretics, but that he himself bears the representing of Holy Church, the words of Eliphaz how they fit the falseness of heretics, let us now at once point out. For it proceeds;

Ver. 6—8. *For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing. Thou hast not given water to the weary, thou hast withholden bread from the hungry. In the might of thine arm thou didst possess the land, and as the most powerful thou didst hold it.*

v. Allegory. 6. In Holy Scripture by the term of 'a pledge' sometimes the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and sometimes the confession of sin, are denoted. Thus pledge is taken as the gift of the Holy Spirit, as where it is said by Paul, *And given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.* For we receive a pledge for this, that we may hold an assurance touching the promise

2 Cor. 1, 22.

that is made to us. And so the gift of the Holy Spirit is called a pledge, in that by this our soul is strengthened to assuredness of the inward hope. Again by the name of a 'pledge' confession of sin is used to be intended, as it is written in the Law; *If thy brother oweth thee aught, and thou takest away a pledge from him, restore the pledge before the setting of the sun.* For our brother is made a debtor to us, when any fellow-creature is proved to have done any thing wrong against us. For sins we call 'debts.' Whence it is said to the servant when he sinned, *I forgave thee all that debt.* And in the Lord's Prayer we pray daily, *Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.* Now we 'take a pledge' from our debtor, when from the lips of him who is found to have sinned against us, we have now gotten a confession of his sin, whereby we are entreated to remit the sin, which was committed against us. For he that confesses the sin that he has done, and begs pardon, has already as it were given a 'pledge' for his debt, which pledge we are bidden to 'restore before the sun set,' because before that in ourselves through pain of heart the Sun of righteousness shall set, we are bound to render back the acknowledgment of pardon to him, from whom we receive the acknowledgment of transgression, that he who remembers that he has done amiss towards us, may be made sensible that what he has done amiss is by us at once remitted. Therefore whereas Holy Church, when it receives back any returning from heretics to the truth of the faith, first persuades them that they must confess the sin of their error, it is said by Eliphaz as under the likeness of heretics; *For thou hast taken away a pledge from thy brother for nought*, i. e. 'From those, that come to thee from us, thou didst exact a confession of error to no purpose.' But, as we said before, if we suppose a 'pledge' the gifts of the Holy Spirit, heretics say that Holy Church has 'taken away the pledge of her brothers,' because they imagine that those that come to her, lose the gifts of the Spirit. Hence it follows, *And stripped the naked of their clothing.*

Ex. 22, 25. 26.

Mat. 18, 32.

Matt. 6, 12.

7. Those whom they draw after them by their perverted preaching, heretics count to have the precepts of their teaching as a kind of garments, and they esteem them to be

Job 22, 6—8. Allegor. clothed so long as the things which they themselves preached they witness observed by them, and when any persons return to Holy Church from them, they immediately fancy that they have lost the garments of instruction. But whereas one that is naked cannot be spoiled, we have to enquire how they are first mentioned as 'naked,' and afterwards as 'stripped?' Now it is necessary to know that every one that enjoys purity of mind, by the very circumstance that he has not the cloak of double-dealing, is 'naked.' And there are some among the Heretics, who have purity of heart indeed, but yet take up the corrupt tenets of their teaching. These same are at once by their own purity 'naked,' and by the preaching of those persons they are as it were clothed. And whereas all such are easily brought back to Holy Church, for this reason that they do not use the wickedness of double-dealing, those persons heretics acknowledge as naked, whom they call stripped by her of their clothing, because they look upon all the simple-minded as slow and dull, who, they see, have parted with their own corrupt tenets.

8. It follows; *Thou hast not given water to the weary, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.* Heretics in proportion as they hold not the solid substance of truth, so sometimes they busy themselves, that they may appear full of discourse, and against the faith of Catholics they are boastful as of the knowledge of learning; all that they see they seek to draw to them by their wicked discoursings, and by the very same act, whereby they are joining others to themselves for destruction, they think themselves doing something conducive to life. Now we call those 'weary' that are worn down under the wearisome load of this world. Mat 11, 28. And hence Truth saith by Himself, *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* And so whereas heretics never cease to preach their own doctrines, they mock at Holy Church as if for ignorance. *Thou hast not given water to the weary, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.* For themselves they think they 'give water to the weary' when to persons travailing under their earthly load they supply the cup of their own error. And they look upon it that they themselves have not 'withholden bread from the hungry,' in that when ques-

tioned even touching things invisible and incomprehensible, they answer with pride and boldness; and they then set themselves down as learned above all men, when they most miserably presume to speak on things unknown. But Holy Church when she sees any one hungering for that which it would not be for his good to get, either on the one hand if they be things already known to her keeps them back with reserve, or if they appear to be unknown as yet, confesses it with humility; and such she recalls to a sense of well-regulated humility, when she bids every one of them by her Preacher, *not to be wise of himself above that he ought to think, but to think soberly.* And again, *Be not highminded, but fear.* And again, *Seek not out the things that are too deep for thee; neither search the things that are above thy strength.* And again, *Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest perchance thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.* For to 'find honey,' is to taste the sweetness of holy intelligence. Which is eaten enough of then, when our perception according to the measure of our faculty is held tight under control. For he is 'filled with honey, and vomits it,' who in seeking to dive deeper than he has capacity for, loses that too from whence he might have derived nourishment. And so, seeing that Holy Church forbids it to feeble minds to dive into deep truths, it is said to blessed Job, *And thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.*

Rom. 12, 3. Rom. 11, 20. Ecclus. 3, 21. Prov. 25, 16.

9. And her greatness also because heretics envy, because she keeps the companies of people every where in the true faith, when they meet with a season of earthly prosperity, they launch out against her in terms of pride, and by their upbraiding disclose how greatly before they secretly envied her power. Thus it follows; *For in the might of thine arm thou didst possess the earth, and as the most powerful thou didst hold it.* As if he said in plain words, 'Whereas thou didst take possession of the earth every where in thy preaching, it was the power of might, and not the reasonableness of truth. For whereas they see that Christian princes hold fast her preaching, all the credit which is given to her by the people, they look upon not as the efficacy of righteousness, but the account of secular power. It goes on;

Job 22, 9. 10. Ver. 9. *Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless hast thou broken.*

vi. Alleg. 10. The common multitudes that are brought under to heretics on their preaching by a carnal understanding conceive the corrupt seeds of their false doctrine, and are joined to them in their condemnation. But when the preachers of errors themselves, Holy Church either receives into her bosom subdued by reason, or binds in under the fetters of her discipline, being hardened by attachment to evil; heretics, being deserted, when they see that the people remain left with themselves without preachers, what else do they but lament the 'widows' left empty by Holy Church? And whereas when the masters of heretics are withdrawn, they imagine that their disciples are enfeebled in their practice, they complain that the arms of the fatherless are broken by Holy Church as it were. Or in another way, because when Holy Church receives persons coming to her from heretics, it is plain without a doubt that she stands up against their former error. Thus there are some that are so attached to virginity of the flesh, that they condemn marriage, and there are some who so extol abstinence, that they abhor those that take necessary nourishment. Concerning whom 1 Tim. 4. 5. it is said by Paul, *Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe.* Those persons then seeing she recalls from the carnal bias of their superstitious belief, when heretics see such living otherwise than they taught them, they bear witness that to the way of acting which they before maintained, their 'arms are broken' by Holy Church. And hence in this period of discipline, if any piece of misfortune chance to befall her, they suppose that it has come in meet retribution for her sins. For it is added;

Ver. 10. *Therefore snares are round about thee; and sudden fear troubleth thee.*

vii. 11. That man 'sudden fear doth trouble,' who neglects to consider what there is hanging over his head from the severity of the Judge, when He comes. Therefore, whereas heretics look upon the faithful people as borne down by sins of misbelief, they make it a charge that 'snares are round about

them.' And because they believe that it does not foresee the future, they suppose this people under the smiting to be 'troubled with sudden fear;' which persons adding yet further insult subjoin,

Ver. 11. *And thou thoughtest*[1] *thou wouldest not see darkness; and that thou wouldest not be borne down with the force of overflowing waters.*

[1] V. *And thoughtest thou?*

As if he said in plain speech; 'Thou didst promise thyself security of peace in hope, and therefore thou wast glad for thine assurance as for the light, nor ever thoughtest for thyself to be oppressed with tribulation. But see, whilst thou art afflicted with evils coming upon thee, whether what thou maintainest be right, the very darkness of trouble which weighs upon thee makes plain; which same troubles Eliphaz compares to 'overflowing waters,' in that whilst one set rushes in over another, as in swoln waters waves follow waves. It goes on,

Ver. 12—14. *Dost thou bethink thee that God is in the height of heaven, and high above the height of the stars? And thou sayest, How doth God know? and, He judgeth as in the dark. Thick clouds are a covering to Him, that He seeth not our matters; and He walketh in the circuit of heaven.*

12. There are very many so dull that they cannot dread aught, saving what they see in a bodily form. Whence it is brought to pass that they do not fear God, in that they cannot see Him. But heretics because they think themselves wise utter words of insult against Catholics, and imagine that He is not feared by them, because they are unable to see Him in a bodily shape, so that as it were from deadness of perception they think that their Maker, because He is higher than heaven and exalted above the tops of the stars, is not able to see from a distance, and that because between ourselves and the seat of heaven the regions of the air are interposed, He, 'as it were buried in a cloud passes judgment out of the darkness,' and intent upon things above, the less considers those below, and whilst He holds together the hinges of heaven by encircling them, doth not see into the interior parts. But who that was out of his right mind even, could suspect such things of God. Who indeed, whereas viii.

Job 22, 15. 16. Lit. He is always Omnipotent, so minds all things that He is present to each one individually, and so present to each that His Presence is never wanting to all together. For though He forsakes persons when they sin, yet to those very persons He is present in respect of judgment, to whom He is seen to be wanting in respect of aidance. Therefore He so encircles what is without that He yet fills what is within, so fills what is within that He yet encircles what is without, so rules the heights above that He does not quit the depths below, is in such sort present to the parts beneath that He does not depart from those above, is so concealed in His own appearance that nevertheless He is known in His working, so known in His work that yet He cannot be comprehended by the calculation of the person knowing Him; He is in such a way present that yet He cannot be seen, in such a way impossible to be seen that yet His very own judgments bear witness to His Presence, so yields Himself to be understood by us that yet the very ray of the perception of Himself He overclouds to us, and again so holds us in by the darkness of ignorance that notwithstanding He shines into our minds with the rays of His brightness, so that at once by being lifted up it may see something, and made to recoil may tremble all over, and, because such as He is it is impossible to see Him, may yet know Him by seeing Him some little. But all this heretics do not reckon Holy Church to be acquainted with, because by a foolish judgment they suppose that they alone are wise. In a type of whom it is yet further added;

Ver. 15. *Wouldest thou mark the old way, which wicked men have trodden?*

ix. 13. As the 'way' of our Redeemer is humility, so the way of the world is pride. And so wicked men tread the way of the world, in that by the desires of this world they walk in self-exaltation. Of which same wicked persons it is yet further added;

Ver. 16. *Which were taken away before their time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood.*

x. 14. Whereas the period of our life is assuredly foreordained for us in the foreknowledge of God, it is a very important question on what principle it is said now, that the wicked are withdrawn from the present world 'before their time.' For

Almighty God though He often change His sentence, yet His counsel never. At that time, then, is every man 'taken away' from this life, at which by Divine power he is foreknown to be before all times. But it is necessary to be known, that Almighty God in creating and disposing of us, according to the deserts of each one also appoints his bounds too, so that either that bad man should live a short time, lest he do mischief to numbers doing right; or that this good man should last longer in life, that he may prove a helper of good practice to numbers; or again that the bad man should be detained longer in life, to add yet more to his wicked deeds, purified by the testing whereof the righteous may live a truer life; or that the good man should be withdrawn more speedily, lest if he were to live long here, wickedness should spoil his innocence. Yet it is to be borne in mind, that it is the loving-kindness of God, to vouchsafe to sinners space for repentance. But because the times vouchsafed they do not turn to the fruits of penance, but to the service of iniquity, what by the mercifulness of God they might have obtained, they let go out of their hands. Although Almighty God foreknows that time of each individual for death, at which his life is brought to an end; nor could any one ever have died at any time, saving at that actual time when he does die. For if to Hezekiah fifteen years are related to have been added for life, the time of his life was increased from that end, indeed, in which of himself he deserved to die; for God's providence foreknew his time at that point whereat He afterwards withdrew him out of the present life. This then being so, what does it mean that it is said, that *the wicked were cut down before their time*, but that all they that love the present life, promise to themselves longer periods of that life? But when death coming on withdraws them from the present life, the spaces of their life, which they were wont as it were in imagination to draw out to themselves longer, it cuts asunder. Of whom it is rightly said, *whose foundation was overflown with a flood.* Book XVI.

15. For the wicked while they neglect in heart to go on to the things of eternity, and do not observe that all things present are fleeting, fix their heart on the love of the present life, and as it were therein construct for themselves the

Job 22, 17. Lit. foundation of a long abode, because by desire they are established in earthly things. Thus Cain is described the Gen. 4, 17. first to have constructed a city upon earth, who thereby is plainly proved an alien, in that the same set a foundation upon earth, who was alien to the stedfastness of the eternal world; for being a stranger to the things above, he has settled his foundation in things beneath, who has placed the settling of his heart in earthly delight. And hence, in the stock of that man, Enoch, which is by interpretation 'dedication,' is born the first. But in the offspring of the Elect Enoch is described to have been the seventh, in this way, because the sons of perdition by building dedicate themselves in this life which comes first, but the Elect await the dedication of their building up in the end of time, i. e. the seventh number. For one may see great numbers minding temporal things alone, seeking after honours, open-mouthed after the compassing of good things, look out for nothing after this life. What then do these but 'dedicate themselves' in the first generation? One may see the Elect seeking nothing of present glory, gladly bearing want, undergoing the ills of this life with a composed mind, that they may be crowned at the Gen. 5, 21. end. And so to the Elect Enoch is born in the seventh generation, in that the dedication of their joy they look for in the glory of the last retribution. And whereas by the daily lapse of time the mortal state in the present life itself runs to an end, and destroys the dedication of the children of perdition by removing those very children of perdition, it is rightly said of the wicked, *Whose foundation was overflown with a flood;* i. e. the mere course of changeableness overthrows in them the settlement of wicked rearing. It goes on;

Ver. 17. *Which said unto God, Depart from us.*

xi. 16. That this too blessed Job had said, who can doubt? Job 21, 14. But what we have unfolded in his words, on account of wearying the reader, we forbear to repeat. It goes on;

And as though the Almighty could do nothing, so reckoned concerning Him.

In this part likewise the wording, and not the statement, is Job 21, 15. changed. For what was expressed by blessed Job; *What is the Almighty that we should serve Him?* is expressed by

Eliphaz, *And as though the Almighty could do nothing, so reckoned concerning Him.* It goes on; Book XVI.

Ver. 18. *Yet He has filled their houses with good things.*

17. The Lord 'filleth the houses of the wicked with good things,' in that even to the unthankful He refuses not His gifts, that either they may blush at the loving-kindness of their Creator and be brought back to goodness, or altogether despising to return thereto, may from the same cause be there worse punished, that here they rendered an evil return for God's more bounteous good, so that severer woes should there chastise those whose wickedness here not even gifts overcame. It goes on;

But let their sentence be far from me.

This too was expressed by blessed Job. For he says, *Whose counsel be far from me.* Though 'sentence' may be taken for one thing and 'counsel' for another; for 'sentence' is in the mouth, 'counsel' in the thoughts. And so whereas Eliphaz wished himself far from the 'sentence' of the wicked, and blessed Job from the 'counsel,' it is plain without denial, that the first desires to be unlike the words of the wicked, but the other unlike their way of thinking even. It goes on; Job 21, 16.

Ver. 19. *The righteous shall see it and be glad; and the innocent one shall laugh them to scorn.*

18. The righteous when they see the unrighteous erring here cannot be glad for the error of persons ruining themselves. For if they rejoice in errings, they cease to be righteous. Again, if in the feeling of triumph they be glad, for this that they are not such as they see others are, they are altogether full of pride. Hence the Pharisee lost his justification, because being glad he set himself above the merits of the Publican, saying, *I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican.* Again, if we say that the righteous can triumph with a perfect joy over the death of the wicked, what sort of thing is joy for vengeance on sinners in this world, wherein the life of the righteous is still uncertain? Let us then distinguish between the times of trembling and exulting. For the righteous see the unrighteous now, and pine at their wickedness; and when they see those smitten, they are made xiii.

Job 22, 20—22. Lit. distrustful touching their own life too. When then shall the righteous see the destruction of the wicked and be glad, saving when with the strict Judge they incorporate henceforth with perfect sureness of triumphing, when in that final Inquest they shall see the condemnation of those, and shall now no longer have aught to fear for themselves? Now therefore they see the children of perdition and groan, then they shall see them and laugh them to scorn, because in triumphing they shall set at nought those, whom now they neither see doing wickedness without groaning nor dying for their wickedness without fearing. Hence by that which is added it is proved that the thing is spoken as concerning their final condemnation. For the sentence is directly introduced,

Ver. 20. *Is not their erecting cut down, and the remnant of them the fire hath consumed*[1]*?*

[1] al. *shall consume*

xiv. 19. For here the wicked are erected, in that they are lifted up in bad deeds. For they both do wickedly, and yet for their wicked deeds they are not stricken. They sin and thrive, they add to their sins, and multiply earthly good. But 'their erecting is cut down' then, when they are either dragged from the present life to destruction, or from the sight of the Eternal Judge to the eternal burning of hell. Which people, though here they quit their dead flesh, yet that same in the resurrection they receive again, that together with that flesh they may burn, in which flesh they did their sin. For as their sin was in mind and body, so the punishment shall be in spirit and flesh alike. Therefore, whereas not even that shall be quit of torment to them, which here they leave dead, it is rightly said now, *the remnant of them the fire hath consumed.* It goes on;

Ver. 21, 22. *Be at one then with Him, and be at peace; thereby thou shalt have the best fruits. Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart.*

xv. Alleg. 20. There is the sin of pride in teaching one better than one's self, which heretics are often guilty of, who touching things which they have wrong notions of, take upon them as if to instruct Catholics. For such they think are then 'at one with God,' if it chance for them to assent to their bad ways; and to those thus 'at one' they promise peace, in that they henceforth cease to quarrel with those

who agree with themselves. Now 'the best fruits' they promise to those agreeing with themselves, in that they believe that they only do good works, whom they triumph in themselves drawing in to their own tenets; which persons this also suits that he adds, *Receive, I pray, the law out of His mouth;* because the things they think of their own heads, they fancy proceed from the mouth of God. *And lay up His words in thine heart;* as if he asserted it in plain words, saying, 'which up to this present time in thy mouth thou hast held, and not in thine heart.' For because he[1] rejected their corrupted tenets, they allege against him[2] that the words of God he had held not in the feeling, but in the shewing off. Whence, as if under a certain appearance of sweetness, they insinuate the poison of pestilent persuading, so as to admonish the Church to lay up the words of God in the heart; which words, if they had ever departed from her heart, from those persons she would never have heard such things. It follows;

[1] al. Holy Church
[2] al. her, &c.

Ver. 23. *If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacle.*

21. That the faithful people have gone away from God is the opinion of heretics, because they see it opposed to their preachings; which same, when they see it afflicted with present calamities, they endeavour, as if by admonition, to draw to their Maker's Grace, saying, *If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up.* As if they said in plain words; Whereas by gainsaying our doctrines thou hast gone away from the Lord, therefore to the building up of righteousness thou art undone. Now by a tabernacle we understand sometimes the habitation of the body, and sometimes the habitation of the heart; for as by the soul we inhabit the body, so by the thoughts we inhabit the mind. Therefore 'iniquity in the tabernacle' of the mind is an evil bent in the attachment of the thought. But 'iniquity in the tabernacle' of the body is carnal doing in the fulfilment of the deed. Thus Eliphaz, forasmuch as he was the friend of a blessed person, seeing some things true, and yet in those points in which he departs from the right line, holding the likeness of heretics, not knowing that it was in consequence of good

xvi.

Job 22. 24. 25. Allegory.

qualities blessed Job was stricken, fancied that he had erred whom he saw smitten, and makes him promises if he would return to Almighty God, saying, *Thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.* As if he said in plain speech, 'Whosoever after erring ways is brought back to God, is purified both in thought and in deed together.' It follows;

Ver. 24. *He shall give the flint for earth, and for the flint golden torrents.*

xvii. 22. What is denoted by 'earth' but weakness in conduct, what by the hardness of the flint but strength, what do we understand by 'the golden torrents,' but the instruction of interior brightness? Now to those that turn themselves to Him Almighty God 'gives for earth the flint,' in that for weak conduct He bestows the strength of vigorous practice. He also gives 'for the flint golden torrents,' in that for vigorous practice He redoubles the instruction of bright preaching, that every converted sinner may from weak be enabled to prove strong, and in his strength rise up even to the uttering forth words of the inner brightness, so that in that person, both weakness of conduct, in which like earth he is crumbled, by strength of good living may be firmly settled, and whereas perception is derived from the life, from that same firmness torrents of gold may run out, seeing that in the mouth of those that live well brightness of teaching runs over. It follows;

Ver. 25. *Yea the Almighty shall be against thine enemies, and thou shalt have heaps of silver.*

xviii. 23. What other enemies are we more subject to than evil spirits, who in our thoughts besiege us, that they may break into the city of our minds, and hold it, taken captive, under the yoke of their dominion? Now by the name of 'silver,' the Psalmist testifies the sacred oracles are denoted, when he says, *The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth.* And often when we apply ourselves to the sacred oracles, we are more grievously subject to the artifices of evil spirits, in that they sprinkle upon our mind the dust of earthly thoughts, that the eyes of our heeding they may darken to the light of the interior vision. Which same the Psalmist had undergone when he said, *Depart from me, ye evil ones, and I will search into the command-*

Ps. 12, 6.

ments of my God; i. e. plainly teaching us that he could not search into the commandments of God, when he was suffering in mind the snares of the evil spirits. Which thing in the work of Isaac too we know to be represented under the evil doing of the Philistines, who with a heap of earth filled up the wells which Isaac had dug. For these very same wells we ourselves dig, when in the hidden meanings of Holy Scripture we penetrate deep. Which wells however the Philistines secretly fill up, when to us advancing to deep things unclean spirits bring in earthly thoughts, and as it were take away the water of divine knowledge which has been discovered. But because no one can overcome these enemies by his own power, it is said by Eliphaz, *Yea the Almighty shall be against thine enemies, and thou shalt have heaps of silver.* As if it were said in plain words; 'While the Lord drives away from thee the evil spirits by His power, the shining talent of divine revelation within gains growth.' It proceeds;

Book XVI.

Gen. 26, 15—18.

Ver. 26. *Then shalt thou abound with delicacies over the Almighty.*

24. To 'abound with delicacies over the Almighty' is in the love of Him to be filled to the full with the banquet of Holy Scripture. In Whose words surely we find as many delicacies, as for our profiting we obtain diversities of meaning, so that now the bare history should be our food, now, veiled under the text of the letter, the moral allegory refresh us from our inmost soul, and now to the deeper things contemplation should hold us suspended, already, in the darkness of the present life, shining in upon us from the light of eternity. And it is necessary to be known, that whosoever 'abounds with delicacies,' is released in a kind of loosening of himself, and slacks from devotion to labour as it were from weariness, because the soul when it has begun to abound with the interior delicacies, henceforth consents not ever to give itself to earthly employments, but being captivated by the love of the Creator, and by its captivity henceforth free, for the contemplating of His likeness fainting it draws breath, and as it were whilst giving over, is invigorated; because whereas sordid burthens it is now no longer able to bear, unto Him through rest it hastens Whom it loves within. Hence also

xix.

Job 22, 26. in admiration of the spouse it is written, *Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness abounding with delicacies?*

Allegory. Cant. 8, 5. Vulg. in that truly except Holy Church 'abounded with the delicacies' of God's words, she could not mount up from the deserts of the present life to the regions above. Thus she 'abounds with delicacies and comes up,' in that whilst she is fed by mystical senses, she is lifted up for the contemplating day by day the things above. Hence likewise the Psalmist says,

Ps. 139, 11. Vulg. *Even the night shall be light about me in my delicacies;* in that while by mystical perception the earnest mind is regaled, henceforth the darkness of the present life is lighted up in her by the radiance of the day to come. So that even in the blindness of this state of corruption the force of the future light should break out into her understanding, and she being fed with delicacies of words, might learn by thus foretasting what to hunger for of the food of truth. It goes on;

And shall lift up thy face unto God.

xx. 25. To lift up the face to God, is to raise the heart for the searching into what is loftiest. For as by the bodily face we are known and distinguishable to man, so by the interior figure to God. But when by the guilt of sin we are weighed to the earth, we are afraid to lift the face of our heart to God; for whereas it is not buoyed up by any of the confidence of good works, the mind is full of affright to gaze on the highest things, because conscience of itself accuses self. But when by the tears of penance sin is now washed out, and things committed are so bewailed that nothing to be bewailed is any more committed, a great confidence springs up in the mind, and for the contemplating the joys of the recompensing from above 'the face of our heart is lifted up.' Now these things Eliphaz would have spoken aright, if he had been admonishing one that was weak; but when he looks down upon a righteous man on account of his scourges, what is this, but that he pours out words of knowledge in not knowing? Which same words if we bring into a type of heretics, they are they that with false promises engage for us to 'lift our face to God.' As if they said plainly to the faithful people, 'As long as thou dost not follow our preaching, thine heart thou sinkest down in

things below.' But whereas Eliphaz charged blessed Job to return to God, from Whom observe that same blessed man had never departed, he yet further subjoins, as promising; Book XVI.

Ver. 27. *Thou shalt make thy prayer unto Him, and He shall hear thee.*

26. For they make their prayer to God, but never obtain to be listened to, who set at nought the precepts of the Lord, when He enjoins them. Whence it is written, *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.* So long then as Eliphaz believed that blessed Job was not heard, he determined that that person had surely done wrong in his practice. And hence he adds further, xxi. Prov. 28, 9.

And thou shalt pay thy vows.

He that has vowed vows, but is unable from weakness to pay the same, has it dealt to him in punishment of sin, that whilst willing good, the having the power should be taken away from him. But when in the sight of the interior Judge, the sin which hinders is done away, it is immediately brought to pass, that the being able attends upon the vow. It goes on;

Ver. 28. *Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee.*

27. This is used to be the special conclusion of those going weakly, that in such proportion they esteem a man righteous as they see him obtain all that he desires; whereas in truth we know that earthly goods are sometimes withheld from the righteous, while they are bestowed with liberal bounty upon the unrighteous; seeing that to sick persons also when they are despaired of, physicians order whatever they call for to be supplied, but those whom they foresee may be brought back to health, the things which they long for they refuse to have given them. Now if Eliphaz introduced these declarations with reference to spiritual gifts, be it known that 'a thing is decreed and is established' to a man, when the virtue which is longed for in the desire, is, by God's granting it, happily forwarded by the carrying of it out as well. And hence it is yet further added; xxii.

And the light shall shine upon thy ways.

Job 23, 1. 2. Allegor. down upon them so much the deeper down, in proportion as it does not see them to possess the innocency which they promise. Whence it is well said by Solomon, *Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any winged fowl.* For the 'winged fowl' are the spirits of good men, which whilst in the hope of truth they soar up to the higher regions, shun the nets of bad men set for their deceiving. It goes on;

Prov. 1, 17.

Chap. xxiii. 1, 2. *Then Job answered and said, Now also is my complaint bitter: and the hand of my stroke is heavier than my groaning.*

xxvi. 31. In his own way blessed Job sets out with the plainer sort of words, but his declaration he closes by the deep following on of mystery. For the pain of the afflicted man ought to have been healed by the consoling of his friends, but because their consoling broke out into the soothings of deceit, the pain of the stricken man was made harsher. For whereas Eliphaz was not afraid to promise him better things on being converted, it was as if by a poisonous remedy the wound were increased. Hence it is rightly said, *Even to-day is my complaint bitter, and the hand of my stroke is heavier than my groaning*, in this respect, viz. that the straining of unregulated consoling increased the stroke manifold, which it ought to have diminished; by which same words taken in a type of Holy Church, the pain of the faithful is likewise set forth, who groan the more, the more they see the wicked using the acts of flattery, who, according to the declaration of Paul, *by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.*

Rom. 16, 18.

32. Which words may also be rightly applied to the viewing with greater exactness the mind of the faithful, who can never be without bitterness even if they seem to prosper in this world. Which persons when adversity too befalls, it redoubles that pain which it finds. Whence it is rightly said, *Now also is my complaint bitter*, that it might be plainly shewn that even in prosperity the mind of the Elect should not be without bitterness. And it is well said, *And the hand of my stroke is heavier than my groaning.* For 'the hand of a stroke,' is the force of the striking. For their first striking the Elect see to be, that from the vision of their Creator they are parted, that the brightness of the

interior illumining they never enjoy, but groan as being banished in the exile of the present life as in a place of darkness. Thus they always have their groaning in this 'hand of their stroke;' but when over and above adversities also befall them in this life, 'the hand of their stroke is heavier than their groaning.' For there was groaning for the stroke even when the adversities of the present life were away. But the bitterness of the original stroke is increased over and above by the trial of adversity. Therefore he says, *And the hand of my stroke is heavier than my groaning?* In that any just man adversity did not smite whilst happy in this life, but came to redouble in him the pain of the wound. Yet it happens by the extraordinary governance of Almighty God, that when in this life the spirit of the righteous man travails most in adversities, he thirsts the more ardently after the beholding of his Maker's face. Hence it is fitly subjoined here, Book XVI.

Ver. 3. *O that one would grant me that I might know and find Him, that I might come even to His seat!*

33. An elect person if he did not know God, assuredly would not love Him. But it is one thing to 'know' by faith, and another to know by His own Form, one thing to find by trustfulness, another to find Him by contemplation. In consequence whereof it is brought to pass that Him Whom they know by faith, all of the Elect long to see by His own Form as well. With the love of Whom they burn and glow, because the honey of His sweetness they already taste of in the mere certainty of their faith. Which that person in the country of the Gerasenes cured of the devils well represents, who wishes to depart with Jesus; but by the Master of health it is told him, *Return to thine own house, and shew what great things God hath done unto thee.* For on him that loves delay is still imposed, that by the longing of love delayed the title to rewarding may be heightened. And so to us Almighty God is made sweet in miracles, and yet in His own loftiness remains hidden from our eyes, that both by shewing something of Himself, He may by secret inspiration set us on fire in the love of Him, and yet by hiding the gloriousness of His Majesty may increase the force of that love of Him by the heat of longing desire. For except the holy xxvii. Luke 8, 39.

Job 23, 4. man sought to see This Being in His Majesty, surely he would not bring in the words, *that I might come even to His seat?* For what is the 'seat' of God but those angelical Spirits, who as Scripture testifies are called 'Thrones?' He then that desires to 'come to the seat of God,' what else does he long for but to be among the Angelic spirits, that no failing moments of the periods of time he henceforth be liable to, but rise up to abiding glory in the contemplation of eternity.

Lit. Alleg.

34. Which words nevertheless are likewise appropriate to the righteous whilst placed in this life. For when they see any thing done against their wish and desire, they have recourse to the hidden judgments of God, that therein they may read that that is not irregularly ordered within, which seems to pass irregularly without. For when they behold with the eyes of faith the Creator of all things, ruling over the Angelical Spirits, then they 'come to His seat.' And whereas they observe that He, Who rules the Angels in a wonderful manner, does not dispose of man in any way contrary to justice, then indeed the principles of cases they see to be as just as they are, whilst the cases themselves externally seem to be unjust. And whereas they do this with humility, they often lay blame to themselves in their will, and their own wishes they sometimes judge in themselves, whilst they ponder that those things are better which the Creator appoints. Hence it is well added in addition,

Ver. 4. *I will order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with reproaches.*

xxviii. 35. To 'order our cause before God' is within the secret depth of our mind by the contemplating of faith to open the eyes of our view to the awful inquisition of His Majesty, to mark what man as a sinner deserves, of the now hidden and secret Judge to take thought how terrible He will hereafter appear. In consequence of which it happens, that the soul is recalled to the knowledge of itself with greater exactness, and in proportion as it sees its secret Judge the greater object of alarm, is so much the more horribly wrung with fears for its actions. It trembles with anxious alarm; its offences it prosecutes with lamentation; in repenting it charges home

what it remembers itself to have been; whence now too after it had been said, *I will order my cause before Him*, it is rightly subjoined, *And fill my mouth with reproaches.* For he who 'orders his cause before God,' does 'fill his mouth with reproaches,' in that while he beholds the exact scrutiny of the awful Judge directed against himself, he pursues himself with the charges of bitter repentance. Now it often happens that whilst we neglect to take account of our faults, what blaming of them may follow in the Judgment we are left ignorant of: but whilst we pursue them by exercising repentance, what the Judge in His Inquisition may say to us concerning them, we find out. Whence it is further added with propriety,

Ver. 5. *That I may know the words that he will answer me, and understand what he will say unto me.*

xxix. 36. For we then bewail our sins, when we begin to weigh them; but we then weigh them the more exactly, when more anxiously we bewail them, and by our lamentations it rises up 'more perfectly in our hearts, what the severity of God threatens those with that commit sin, what will be those rebukings upon the children of perdition, what the terror, what the abhorrence of the unappeasable Majesty. For so great things shall the Lord then being angry 'say' to the lost, as great as He permits them of justice to undergo. Which same words of His visitation, the righteous, because now they anxiously fear them, escape free from. But who in that inquisition might be found righteous, if God according to the Majesty of His Might, so sifted the life of man? Therefore it is fitly subjoined,

'one Ms. 'is known.'

Ver. 6. *I would not that He should contend with me with great power, nor oppress me with the weight of His mightiness.*

xxx. 37. For the soul of one however righteous, if he be judged with strictness by Almighty God, is borne down by the weight of His mightiness. In which same words this is likewise to be understood, that whereas the holy man shews the might of God, what else of Him does he desire, but His weakness? And it is written, *the weakness of God is stronger than men.* Whence too he directly adds,

1 Cor. 1, 25.

Job 23, 7—9. Prophecy. Ver. 7. *Let Him put forth equity against me, and my judgment shall come unto victory.*

For who else saving the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, is denoted by the title of 'equity?' 1 Cor. 1, 30. Concerning Whom it is written, *Who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness.* And whereas this same righteousness came into this world against the ways of sinners, we get the better of our old enemy, by whom we were held captive. So let him say, *I would not that He should contend with me with great power, nor oppress me with the weight of His mightiness. Let Him put forth equity against me, and my judgment shall come unto victory.* i. e. 'for the rebuking of my ways, let Him send His Incarnate Son, and then the plotting foe, by the sentence of mine absolving, I as victor will turn out.' For if the Only-begotten Son of God had so remained invisible in the strength of the Divine Nature, as not to have admitted aught derived from our weakness, when could weak men ever have found the access of grace to Him? For the weight of His greatness, being considered, would rather have oppressed than aided him; but the Strong above all things came weak among all things, that whereas He agreed with us by assumed weakness, He might elevate us to His own abiding strength. For in Its loftiness the Divine Nature could never have been apprehended by us, inasmuch as being too little, but He bowed Himself down to man through human nature, and we as it were mounted up on Him laid low; He rose, and we were lifted up. Whence this too is added directly, whereby the Divine Being may be shewed invisible and incomprehensible. Thus it goes on;

Ver. 8, 9. *If I go to the East, He appeareth not; if I go to the West, I shall not understand Him; if I go to the left hand, what shall I do? I shall not comprehend Him; if I turn myself to the right hand I shall not see Him.*

xxxi. 38. For the Creator of all things is not in a part, inasmuch as He is every where. And then He is found the less, when He, That is whole every where, is sought in a part. For the Incomprehensible Spirit containeth all things within Itself, Which at the same time both while filling encompasseth, and

while encompassing filleth, both in supporting overtops, and in overtopping supports; and it is well that after it had been said, *If I go to the East, He appeareth not; if I go to the West, I shall not understand Him; if I go to the left hand, what shall I do? I shall not comprehend Him; if I turn myself to the right hand I shall not see Him;* he thereupon added, *But He knoweth the way that I take.* As if he said in plain words, 'I am unable to see Him, Who seeth me, and Him that beholdeth me most minutely, I have no power to behold:' that is to say, that he might shew that He is so much the more heedfully to be feared, in proportion as He is not discernible. For He Who so beholds us that He may not be by us beheld, is so much the more to be dreaded in proportion as in seeing all things He is not seen in the least degree. For when we believe that there is any one hidden in ambush to assault us, we dread him the more that we do not at all see him; and when we do not at all discover his ambush where it is placed, we apprehend it even there where it does not exist. And our Creator, Who is whole every where, and while discerning all things is not discerned, is the more to be dreaded in proportion as continuing invisible, what He may determine concerning our actions and at what time is not known. Which words, too, may be understood in another sense also. For we 'go to the East,' when we lift up our mind in thinking of His Majesty. But 'He appeareth not,' seeing that such as He is in His own Nature, by mortal thought He cannot be seen to be. *If I go to the West, I shall not understand Him;* we 'go to the west,' when the eye of the heart that is lifted up in God, but made to recoil by the mere immensity of the light, we bring back to our own selves, and being spent with labour, we learn that the thing is very much above us which we were seeking; and viewing our own mortal condition find out that as yet we are creatures unfit to have the power to behold One that is Immortal. *If I go to the left hand, what shall I do? I shall not comprehend Him.* To 'go to the left hand' is to yield one's self to the enjoyments of our sins. And it is surely plain, that he cannot 'apprehend God,' who still in the gratification of sin lies prostrate along the left side. *If I turn myself to the right side I shall not see Him.* He truly is 'turned to the right hand,'

Job 23, 8. 9. Lit. who is lifted up on the ground of virtuous attainments. But he cannot see God, who is glad with selfish joy for his good deeds; because in that man the swelling of pride weighs down the eye of the heart. Whence it is well said elsewhere, *Thou shalt not decline to the right hand nor to the left.* In all which particulars the soul very often searches out itself, nor yet is able perfectly to find out itself. Whence it is fitly added here,

Deut. 17, 11.

But He Himself knoweth the way that I take.

xxxii. 39. As if he said in plain terms, 'I for mine own part both search myself strictly, and am not able to know myself thoroughly; yet He, Whom I have not power to see, seeth most minutely all the things that I do.' It goes on;

And He shall try me like gold which passeth through the fire.

Gold in the furnace is advanced to the brightness of its nature, whilst it loses the dross. And so like 'gold that passeth through the fire' the souls of the righteous are tried, which by the burning of tribulation through and through, both have their defects removed, and their good points increased. Nor was it of pride that the holy man likened himself as set in tribulation to gold, in that he who, by the voice of God, was pronounced righteous before the stroke, was not for this reason permitted to be tried that bad qualities might be cleared off, but that excellences might be heightened; but gold is purified by fire; less then than he was did he think of his own self, in that, being delivered over to suffer tribulation, he believed that he was being purified, whereas he had not any thing in him to be purified.

40. Now it is necessary for us to know, that though the mind of the righteous entertains humble thoughts touching itself, yet the several things that they do, they see to be as right as they are, while they never presume on the rightness of them. Whence it is yet further added; *My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips, and I have hid the words of his mouth in my bosom.* But in the midst of all this let us see whether he thinks himself to be any thing. It follows; *But He is Himself alone.* By the subjoining of which sentence, he shews that amidst all the

good things which he had done he believed himself to be nothing. But taking up these same words from the beginning, let us run over them as well as we are able. Book XVI.

Ver. 11. *My foot hath held His steps.*

41. For as a kind of footsteps of God are His doings which we see, by which doings both the good and bad man is governed, by which the righteous and unrighteous are arranged in their classes, whereto both every one that is subject is led on day by day to better things, and he that is in rebellion against them is borne with going headlong into worse. Concerning which same footsteps the Prophet said, *Thy goings have been seen, O God.* And so we, when we behold the efficacy of His long-suffering and pitifulness, and upon so beholding strive to imitate the same, what else do we but follow the 'footsteps of His goings,' in that we imitate some outskirts of His method of proceeding. Thus these footsteps of His Father 'Truth' gave it in charge to imitate when He said, *Pray for them which persecute you and falsely accuse you; that ye may be the children of your Father Which is in heaven. For He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good.* It may be too that blessed Job who had already said with assured faith, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall arise at the latter day from the earth;* so dwelt on the future working of Wisdom Incarnate to be, in like manner as we behold by faith the works of that Wisdom now past, how that the Mediator between God and man should be kind to give, humble to bear, patient to afford an example. Whose life while blessed Job, filled with the Spirit from above, regarded with heedful intentness, foreseeing the future lowliness of His mild character, he refers as it were to a pattern set before him, so that whatever he did in this life he might bind fast to His footsteps in imitating, that so he who was incapable of seeing the high things of His secret ordering, as it were looking on the ground, might keep His footsteps for imitation. Of which same 'footsteps' of Him it is said by Peter, *Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His footsteps.* Concerning whom it is yet further added; xxxiii. Ps. 68, 24. Matt. 5, 44. 45. Job 19, 25. 1 Pet. 2, 21.

Job 23, 11. 12. Lit.

Ver. 11. *His way have I kept, and not declined.*

xxxiv. 42. For he 'keeps the way and does not decline,' who practises the thing whereon his mind is bent. Since to 'keep' in the bent is 'not to decline' in the practice. For this is the anxiety of the righteous, that day by day they should try their actions by the ways of truth, and proposing these as a rule to themselves, they should not decline from the track of their right course. Thus day by day they strive to get above themselves, and in proportion as they are lifted up upon the summit of virtues, they judge with heedful censure, whatever there is of themselves left remaining below themselves. And they are in haste to draw the whole of themselves there, where they find that they have been brought in part. It goes on;

Ver. 12. *Neither have I gone back from the commandments of His lips.*

xxxv. 43. As servants that serve well are ever intent upon their masters' countenances, that the things they may bid they may hear readily, and strive to fulfil; so the minds of the righteous in their bent are upon Almighty God, and in His Scripture they as it were fix their eyes on His face, that whereas God delivers therein all that He wills, they may not be at variance with His will, in proportion as they learn that will in His revelation. Whence it happens, that His words do not pass superfluously through their ears, but that these words they fix in their hearts. Hence it is here added;

I have hid the words of His mouth in my breast.

xxxvi. 44. For we 'hide the words of His mouth in the bosom of our heart,' when we hear His commandments not in a passing way, but to fulfil them in practice. Hence it is that of the Virgin Mother herself it is written, *But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.* Which same words even when they come forth to the practising lie hidden in the recesses of the heart, if through that which is done without, the mind of the doer be not lifted up within. For when the word conceived is carried on to the deed, if human praise is aimed at herein, the word of God assuredly is not 'hidden in the bosom of the mind.' But I would

Luke 2, 19.

know, O blessed man, wherefore thou examinest thyself with so much earnestness, wherefore thou takest thyself to task with so much anxiety? It goes on, Book XVI.

Ver. 13. *But He is Himself alone, and no man can turn away His thought.*

45. Are there not angels and men, the heavens and the earth, the air and the waters of the ocean, all the winged creatures, quadrupeds, and creeping things? And surely it is written, *Which God created that they should be.* Whereas then there is such a multitude of things in the circle of nature, wherefore is it now said by the voice of the blessed man, *He is Himself alone?* Why, it is one thing to be, and another thing to BE primarily, one thing to be subjectly to change, and another thing to BE independently of change. For these are all of them in being, but they are not maintained in being in themselves, and except they be maintained by the hand of a governing agent, they cannot ever be. For all things subsist in Him by Whom they were created, nor do the things that live owe their life to themselves, nor are those that are moved, but do not live, by their own caprice brought to motion. But He moveth all things, Who quickens some with life, whilst some that are not so quickened He preserves, disposing them in a wonderful way for last and lowest being. For all things were made out of nothing, and their being would again go on into nothing, except the Author of all things held it by the hand of governance. All the things then that have been created, by themselves can neither subsist nor be moved, but they only so far subsist, as they have obtained that they should be, are only so far moved, as they are influenced by a secret impulse. For see the sinner is ordained to be scourged by human accidents; the earth is parched in his toilings, the sea tossed in the shipwreck of him, the air on fire in his sweating, the heavens are darkened in floods upon him, his fellow creatures burn with fire in oppressions of him, and the angelical powers are made active in his troubling. Are all these things which we have named being inanimate, or which we have named endued with life, put into activity by their own instincts, or rather by impulses from God? Whatever therefore it be that is arrayed against us outwardly, in that thing xxxvii. Gen. 2, 3.

Job 23, 10. Lit. Ex. 3, 14. That Being is to be regarded Who ordains it inwardly. In every case then He is to be regarded as alone, Who IS primarily, Who also saith to Moses, *I AM THAT I AM, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, He that IS hath sent me unto you.* And so, when we are scourged by the things that we see, we ought anxiously to fear Him Whom we do not see. And so let the holy man look down upon all that alarms him without, all that in respect of its being would go on to nothing except it were ruled, and with the eye of the mind, all else being kept back, let him see Him only in comparison with Whose Being for ourselves to be is not to be, and let him say, *He only is Himself alone.*

46. Concerning Whose unchangeableness it is directly after added with propriety, *No man can turn away His thought,* for as He is unchangeable in Nature, so He is unchangeable in Will. For 'none turneth away His thought,' in that no man has power to resist His secret judgments. Since though there have been persons who might seem to 'have turned away His thought,' yet His interior thought was this, that they should by praying have power to avert His sentence, and that they should obtain from Him what to effect with Him. So let him say, *and no man turneth away His thought,* in that His judgments once fixed can never be altered. Whence it is written, *He hath made a decree which shall not pass.* And again, *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.* And again, *For My thoughts are not as your thoughts, neither are your ways as My ways.* And so whenever outwardly the sentence appears to be altered, inwardly the counsel is not altered, in that in relation to each particular thing that is unalterably established within, whatever is done alterably without. It goes on;

Ps. 148, 6. Mark 13, 31. Is. 55, 8.

And what His soul desireth, even that He doeth.

xxviii. 47. Whereas God is exterior to all bodies, interior to all minds, that identical power of His, whereby He penetrates all things, and regulates all things, is called His 'soul.' Whose will not even those things oppose, which appear to be done contrary to His will, seeing that even what He does not order, to this end He sometimes suffers to be done, that so through this thing that which He does order may be the

more surely done. For the will of the Apostate Angel is bad, yet by God it is wonderfully ordered, so that even his very artifices as well should promote the welfare of the good, whom they purify whilst they try. So then 'whatever His soul desireth, that He doeth,' that from the same source as well He might fulfil His will, whence there seemed to be a resisting of His will. Therefore let the holy man be filled with alarm, and contemplating the weight of that great Majesty, let him find himself out to be weak. Book XVI.

48. But it is well to put the question amidst these words, and to say, 'O blessed Job, wherefore in the midst of such scourges dost thou dread still further afflictions?' Thou art already encompassed with sorrows, by innumerable calamities thou art already straitly beset. Misfortune is to be apprehended, which is not yet entered upon. Thou being in the midst of such great sorrow, what dost thou apprehend? But mark how the holy man satisfying our questioning adds;

Ver. 14. *For when He hath accomplished His will in me, there are many other such things with Him.*

49. As if he said in plain words, 'Already I weigh well what I am suffering, but I still dread things that I may undergo.' For He accomplishes His will in me, in that He afflicts one with many strokes, but 'there are many like things with Him,' in that if He is minded to strike, He sees yet further where the stroke may be added to. Hence we may collect how fearful he was before the scourge, who even after being scourged still dreads lest he should be farther stricken. For seeing the incomprehensible force both of power and penetration that resides in Him, the righteous man would not even on the ground of the scourge upon him be secure. And hence fearing still more He adds; xxxix.

Ver. 15. *Therefore am I troubled at His presence; when I consider I am afraid of Him.*

50. He is rightly 'troubled at the presence of the Lord,' who sets before the view of his eyes the terribleness of His Majesty, and is throughly shaken by dread of His Righteousness, whilst he sees that he is not fit to render his accounts if he be judged with severity. Now it is rightly said, *When I consider I am afraid of Him*, because the force of the Divine visitation when a man considers little, xl.

Job 23, 16. Lit. He dreads but little, and in this life is as it were secure, in proportion as he is a stranger to the consideration of the interior strictness. For the righteous are ever turning back into the secret chamber of the heart, contemplating the power of the hidden strictness, presenting themselves to the judgment of the interior Majesty, that they may one day be the more secure, in proportion as they would not make themselves secure here so long as they lived. For when the minds of evildoers refuse to consider what they have to fear, sooner or later by rejoicing they are brought to that, which they do not by fearing in any way escape. But see in regard to blessed Job, we know that he was devoted to frequent sacrifices to God, that he was given up to acts of hospitality, to the necessities of the poor, that he was humble towards his own dependants even, kind towards those that opposed him, and yet he received such numberless scourges, nor now became secure amidst them, but still entertained fear, still thinking of the power of the Divine strictness he is made to tremble. What then shall we miserable creatures say? what shall we sinners say, if he so fears, who so acted? But let him make known whether the weight of this great fear he has from himself. It goes on;

Ver. 16. *For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me.*

xli. 51. By divine gift the heart of the righteous man is said to be made soft, in that it is penetrated with the fear of the judgment from Above. For that it is soft, which is capable of being penetrated, but that is hard, which cannot be penetrated. Whence it is said by Solomon, *Happy is the man that feareth always, but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.* And so the merit of his dread he ascribes not to himself but to his Creator, who says, *For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me.* Now the hearts of good men are not secure but troubled, in that whilst they think on the heavy weight of the future reckoning, they do not seek to enjoy rest here, and they interrupt their security by the thought of the interior severity. Which persons nevertheless, in the midst of the very chastenings of fear, often recall their mind to the gifts, and that by comforting they may cheer themselves, amidst this which they fear,

Prov. 28, 14.

they bring back the eye to the gifts which they have received, that hope may buoy up him whom fear bears down. Hence too it follows; Book XVI.

Ver. 17. *Because I have not perished on account of the overhanging darkness; neither hath the darkness covered my face.*

52. For he, being set under the scourge, dies off from the health of the body 'on account of the overhanging darkness,' who is for this reason smitten for the past that he may be shielded from future punishments. For scourges inflicted on the good either wipe out evil things done, or parry off future ones which might have been done. But blessed Job, forasmuch as when set under the rod he was neither purified from foregoing sins nor shielded from those that threatened, but only had his goodness increased under the stroke, says with confidence, *Because I have not perished on account of the overhanging darkness, neither hath the darkness covered my face.* For he that always had before his eyes the weight of divine dread, the face of his heart the darkness of sin never covered. And he whom no punishments followed, did not lose the health of the body 'on account of the overhanging darkness.' xlii.

53. And it is to be noted, that in his own person telling what had gone before, he never says 'neither hath darkness touched my face,' but 'neither hath darkness covered my face;' for often even the hearts of the righteous do thoughts arising defile, and affect them with the gratifications of things earthly, but whereas they are speedily put away by the hand of holy discretion, it is quickly brought to pass that darkness should not cover the face of the heart, which was already touching it by unlawful enjoyment; for often in the very sacrifice of prayer urgent thoughts press themselves on us, that they should have force to carry off or pollute what we are sacrificing in ourselves to God with weeping eyes. Whence when Abraham at sunset was offering up the sacrifice, he was subject to birds setting on, which he diligently drove away, that they might not carry off the sacrifice which had been offered. So let us, when we offer to God a holocuast upon the altar of our hearts, keep it from unclean birds, that the evil spirits and bad thoughts may not seize upon that

Job 24. 1. Lit. which our mind hopes that it is offering up to God to a good end. It goes on;

C. xxiv. 1. *Times are not hidden from the Almighty; they that know Him, know not His days.*

xliii. 54. What are called 'the days' of God, save His very Eternity itself? which is sometimes described by the announcement of 'one day,' as where it is written, *For one day in Thy courts is better than a thousand.* But sometimes on account of its length it is represented by the expression of a number of days, whereof it is written, *Thy years are throughout all generations.* We then are wrapped up within the divisions of time, through this that we are created beings. But God, Who is the Creator of all things, by His Eternity encompasses our times. And so he says, *Times are not hidden from the Almighty; they that know Him, know not His days;* seeing that *He*, indeed, sees all of ours to the comprehending thereof, but all that is His we are in no degree able to comprehend. But whereas the nature of God is simple, it is very much to be wondered at why he should say, *They that know Him, know not His days.* For it is not that He Himself is one thing and His 'days' another; since God is that thing which He hath. For He hath eternity, yet He is Himself Eternity. He hath Light, yet He is Himself His own Light. He hath brightness, yet He is Himself His own Brightness. And so in Him it is not one thing to be, and another thing to have. What does it mean then to say, *They that know Him, know not His days*, except that even they that know Him, do not know Him as yet? For even they who already hold Him by faith, as yet know Him not by appearance. And whereas He, Whom we truly believe, is Himself eternity to Himself, yet in what way there is that eternity of Him we know not. For in the thing that we hear touching the power of the Divine Nature, we are sometimes used to imagine such things as we know by experience. Thus every single thing that begins and ends, is bounded by the beginning and ending. And if it be by any little delay stayed from being ended, it is called long; on which same length whilst a man carries back the eyes of his mind in recollection, and stretches them out before in anticipation, as it were over a space of time he expands them in imagination. And when

Ps. 84, 10.

Ps. 102, 24.

he hears the eternity of God mentioned in human sort, to his mind on the stretch he sets forth long spaces of life, in which same he may ever measure both what has gone away in the rear as a thing to be retained in the memory, and what remains before as a thing to be looked forward to in the intention. Book XVI.

55. But as often as in the case of eternity we have such thoughts, we do not as yet know eternity. For that which is neither commenced by a beginning nor finished by an ending, is there, where neither is there looked forward to that which shall come, nor does there pass by that which may be recalled to mind, but that alone is, which is everlasting BEING. Which though we and the Angels with a beginning begin to see to be, yet we see it to be without beginning, where it is to be always without end, in such a way, that the mind never extends itself to things following in a sequence, as if things that are were multiplied and made long. For though by the Spirit of Prophecy it is said, *The Lord shall reign for ever and*[1] *for worlds and further;* after the manner of Holy Writ, the Spirit spoke in man's way to men, so as to speak of 'further' there, where looking forward could not enter. For eternity has no 'further,' which has it always to be, wherein no part of its length goes by that another part should take its place, but the whole at once is Being, that nothing should seem to be wanting to it, which it may not see, in which eternity every thing that is the mind sees to be at once not slow and long. But in speaking such things of the days of eternity we are trying to see something more than we do see. And so let it be rightly said, *They that know Him know not His days;* in that though we already know God by faith, yet how His Eternity is at once without a past before all ages, without a future after all ages, long without delay, and everlasting without looking forward, we do not see. Thus blessed Job, whilst bearing a type of Holy Church, (because he restrains himself under a great bridling of knowledge, so as not to be wiser than he ought to be,) and testifying that the days of God can never be understood, directly brings back the view of the mind to the pride of Heretics who aim to be deeply enlightened, and what they are incapable of taking in at all, they boast that they know in perfect measure. Thus it goes on; Exod. 15, 18. [1] LXX so.

Job 24, 2. Ver. 2. *Others remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed them.*

Alleg. xliv. 56. Whom does he denote by the title of 'others,' saving Heretics, who to the bosom of Holy Church are strangers? For they the same persons remove landmarks, in that the constitutions of the Fathers they by walking awry do overstep. Concerning which same constitutions it is written, Prov. 22, 28. *Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set.* And these *violently take away the flocks, and feed them*, in that all the inexperienced, by wicked persuasions, they draw to themselves, and with baneful lessons nourish them for slaughtering. For that the ignorant multitudes are represented by the designation of 'flocks,' the words of the Spouse bear witness, Who addresses His Espoused, in the words, *Except thou know thyself, O beautiful amongst women, depart forth, and go after the footsteps of the flocks;* i. e. 'excepting that by living well, thou knowest thine honour whereby thou art created after the likeness of God, depart forth from the sight of the contemplation of Me, and follow the life[1] of the uninstructed multitudes. It goes on;

[1] al. 'the way.'

Ver. 3. *They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow's ox for a pledge.*

xlv. 57. Whom do we understand by the fatherless in this place, but the Elect of God, who are set in tenderness of mind, are nourished with the efficacious grace of faith, and do not yet see the face of their Father, Who has already died in their behalf. And there are very many in the Church, who see certain persons aiming at the things of heaven, having all earthly things in contempt, and though they themselves are toiling with all their strength in this world's labours, yet to those whom they see panting after heavenly things, from the goods which they possess in this world, they bring this life's aid and support. And though they cannot themselves follow a spiritual life, yet to those reaching forth to the things above they gladly yield means of support. For an ass is used to bear the burthens of men. He then is as it were a kind of ass of the Elect, who whilst yielding himself to earthly courses, carries loads for the uses of men. And often when Heretics turn aside any such person from the bosom of Holy Church, they are as it were

driving off the ass of the fatherless, in that when they force him into their own misbelief, they drive him away from tendance on the good. Book XVI.

58. But who is to be understood by the 'widow' saving Holy Church, who is bereft in the mean season of the sight of her slain Husband? Now 'the ox' of this 'widow' is every individual preacher. And it often chances that Heretics by their perverted tenets draw over even those very persons that appeared to be preachers. And so they 'take the widow's ox,' when they carry off from Holy Church even a person preaching. And it is rightly added here, *for a pledge.* For when a pledge is taken away, one thing indeed is held in our hands, but another yet further is sought for. And very often Heretics for this reason try to carry off those that preach, that they may draw to them their followers likewise. Thus 'the widow's ox is taken away for a pledge,' when the same person that practised preaching is for this reason carried off, that others may follow after him. By whose downfall it is very often brought about, that they also go forth from the bosom of Holy Church, who, imbued with godly habits in her, seemed to be meek and humble. Hence it is added;

Ver. 4. *They have turned the needy out of the way; and have oppressed together the meek of the earth.*

59. For by the term of 'poverty,' humility is very often denoted; and very often they that appear gentle and humble, if they have not learnt to maintain discretion, fall by the examples of other men. But there are some Heretics, who eschew to mix themselves with the multitudes, and seek the retirement of a life of greater privacy, and these very often with the bane of their persuasion poison those that they meet with the more, in proportion as by the claims of their life they the more seem deserving of respect. Concerning whom it is subjoined; xlvi.

Ver. 5. *Others as wild asses*[1] *in the desert go forth to their work.* [1] *onagri*

60. For the 'onager' is a wild ass; and in this place Heretics are rightly likened to 'wild asses,' in that being let loose in their pleasures, they are strange to the fetters of faith and reason. Hence it is written; *A wild ass used to the wilder-* Jer. 2, 24. xlvii.

Job 24, 6. ALLEG. *ness that snuffeth up the wind of his love at his pleasure.* For he is a wild ass used to the wilderness, who whilst he does not cultivate the ground of his heart with excellence of discipline, there dwells, where there is no fruit. Since he 'snuffeth up the wind of his love at his pleasure,' in that the things that from the desire of knowledge he conceives in his mind, are efficacious to puff up but not to edify. Against whom it is said, *Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.* Hence here too the words are suitably brought in; *they go forth to their work.* For it is not the work of God, but their own work that they do, whereas they follow not right doctrines, but their own desires. For it is written, *He that walketh in a perfect way, he served me.* So he that does not walk in a perfect way, serves himself more than the Lord. It goes on;

1 Cor. 8, 1.

Ps. 101, 6.

Watching for a prey, they provide bread for their children.

xlviii. 61. They 'watch for a prey,' who are always trying to seize the words of the righteous according to their own perception, that by them they may provide the bread of error for evil-minded children. Of which some bread it is said in Solomon, in the words of the woman that bears the figure of heretical wickedness, *Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.* It goes on;

Prov. 9, 17.

Ver. 6. *They reap a field not their own, and the vineyard of him whom they have oppressed by violence they gather.*

62. By the name of a 'field' may be denoted the wide compass of Holy Scripture, and Heretics 'reap' it not being their own, in that they carry away from it sentences which are infinitely removed from their own notions; which same is furthermore described by the title of a 'vineyard,' in that through the sentences of truth it puts forth the clusters of the virtues; the owner of which vineyard, i. e. the originator of Holy Scripture, they as it were 'oppress with violence,' because they endeavour violently to twist and turn a sense of His upon[1] the words of Holy Writ; as He saith, *But thou hast made Me to serve with thy sins, thou hast given Me labour in thine iniquity.* And they 'reap the vintage of that vineyard,' in that they heap together therefrom clusters of sentences after the bent of their own understanding. It may be that by the title of a 'field' or of a 'vineyard' the Church Universal is set forth, which corrupt preachers 'reap,'

Is. 43, 24.

[1] L. only reads 'in the words.'

and by oppressing in His members the Author of it, 'gather the vintage,' in that in bearing down upon the grace of our Creator, whilst they seize off therefrom persons who seemed to be righteous, what else is this but that they carry off 'ears' or 'clusters' of souls? Of whom it is yet further added;

Ver. 7. *They send men away naked, taking away their garments, who have no covering in the cold.*

63. As garments cover the body, so do good works the soul. Whence it is said to one, *Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.* So Heretics, when in the minds of any they destroy good works, manifestly take away the garments of clothing; and it is well said, *who have no covering in the cold.* For 'covering' has relation to righteousness, 'cold' to sin. And there are some that in some points commit sin, but in some points follow good works. He then that does wrong by one set of actions, and practises righteousness by another, what is this man but clothed in the cold? He is cold, and he is covered, in that in one part of practice he is made warm for righteousness, in another he is made cold for sin. But whenever Heretics take away their good works from such persons, they bring it to pass that they have not in the cold wherewith to clothe themselves. Therefore it is rightly said, *They send men away naked, taking away their garments, who have no covering in the cold;* that is, for the cold of sin by itself to kill those whom the warmth of a different practice in some degree covered. But it may be, that by the cold there is denoted desire, by the garment practice. And there are great numbers who are still agitated with wrong desires, but striving with themselves in the spirit, they fight against themselves by right works, and with good actions cover that which they perceive through temptation to spring against them of the wrong sort. And so these from the cause that they desire what is evil are cold, and by the act by which they practise what is good, they are clothed. But when Heretics by wrong statements do away with the works of a right faith, what else do they bring to pass but that those that still feel the cold of carnal desires should die without the clothing of good works? It proceeds; 1. Rev. 16, 15.

Job 24, 8. 9. ALLEG. Ver. 8. *They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and embrace the stones for want of a garment.*

64. 'The showers of the mountains' are the words of the learned. Of which same 'mountains' it is delivered by the voice of Holy Church; *I lifted up mine eyes unto the hills:* and so those persons, 'the showers of the mountains wet,' in that the streams of the holy fathers fill them to the full. But as we have already said before, 'the garment' we take for the covering of good practice, with which a man is covered, that in the eyes of Almighty God the filthiness of his depravity should be clothed over. Whence it is written, *Blessed are they whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.* Whom do we understand by the title of 'the stones' but the strong ones within the bounds of Holy Church, to whom it is declared by the first shepherd; *Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house.* And so those who on the grounds of their own practice have no reliance, fly to the protection of the holy Martyrs, at their sacred bodies set themselves to tears, and entreat, at their intercessions, to obtain pardon [a]. What then do these do by such self-abasement, but because they lack the covering of good practice 'embrace the stones?' It goes on;

Ps. 121, 1. Ps. 32, 1. 1 Pet. 2, 5.

Ver. 9. *They have done violence in preying on the fatherless, and have spoiled the common folk of the poor* [1].

[1] *vulgus pauperum.*

lii. 65. When Heretics lack the good fortune of the present life, to weak minds they recommend by words of soft persuasion things that are wrong; but if the good fortune of the present time at all smiles upon them, they do not cease even by violence to draw those they are able. So that by the title of 'fatherless' they are denoted who are still delicate, being set within the pale of Holy Church, whose life their merciful Father by dying preserved, who are already brought forward to a good purpose of mind, but are not yet confirmed with any efficacy in good deeds. The Heretics, then, 'do violence in

[a] He speaks as of an established practice, and in fact it is found at a much earlier period. See St. Chrys. on the Statues, Hom. vi. §. 19, and note l. Tr. p. 134. The Church has never departed from the doctrine of St. Chrys. on 1 Cor. end of Hom. xlii. that no intercession can deliver one who is in a state of damnation. But St. Gregory always speaks of the remission of punishment as a matter of degrees, and in Hom. in Ev. xxxii. 7. where he relates a vision of SS. Processus and Martinianus, he says they promised the woman who offered them alms to do in the Day of Judgment '*what they could.*'

preying on the fatherless,' in that upon the weak minds of the faithful they make assault with violence in words and deeds. But 'the common folk of the poor' are the uninstructed multitude, which, if it had the riches of true knowledge, would never part with the covering of its faith. For genuine teachers are like a kind of senators within the bounds of Holy Church, who, while they multiply knowledge in the heart, abound in the true riches in themselves. But Heretics 'spoil the common sort of the poor,' in that whilst the learned they cannot, all the unlearned by their pestilent preaching they strip naked of the covering of the faith. It goes on; BOOK XVI.

Ver. 10. *From the naked, and those going without clothing and a hungered, they have taken away the ears of corn.*

66. What he calls *naked* he repeats in the words *without clothing*, but it is one thing to *be* naked and another thing to *go* naked. Thus every person that does neither what is good nor what is bad is naked and idle; but he that does what is evil '*goes* naked,' in that without the covering of good practice he is going by the road of wickedness. But there are some who, as knowing the evil of their wickedness, are in haste to be filled with the bread of righteousness, and hunger to receive the sayings of Holy Scripture; and these, as often as they turn over in thought the sentences of the Fathers for the improvement of the mind, as it were from a good crop they carry ears of corn. And so 'from the naked and those going without clothing and a hungered, Heretics take away ears of corn;' in that whether any persons be idle and never exercise themselves in any thing good, or whether they are going by the way of shamelessness without the covering of good practice, even if they at any time have now the desire to return to repentance, and long for the food of the word, from those same being a hungered they take away the ears of corn, because in the minds of those persons by mischievous persuasions they destroy the sentences of the Fathers. Nor do we improperly say that the ears of corn signify the sentences of the Fathers, in that often whilst they are delivered in forms of figurative diction, we remove the covering of the letter from them like the chaff of corn, that we may be regaled with the marrow of the Spirit. It goes on; liii.

Job 24, 12. Ver. 11. *They rest at mid-day amid the heaps of those that thirst with the winepresses being trodden.*

Alleg. liv. 67. All those that persecute Holy Church, what else do they but 'tread the winepress?' Which is allowed to be by the Divine appointment, that the clusters of souls may flow out into spiritual wine, and being divested of the corruptible flesh run into the heavenly realms as into a receptacle. For whilst the unrighteous bear down the righteous, they as it were put clusters of the grape beneath their feet. And the clusters being squeezed run over for the fulness of the heavenly feast, which were before as if hanging in the freedom of this air. Thus David the Prophet, regarding the chastening of Holy Church[b], writes the Psalm 'for the winepresses.' Now all that bear hard upon the life of the faithful, tread and thirst, in that by doing things that are cruel they are rendered the more savage; being blinded by just deserts of their ungodliness, they go about to do things more grievous the more they have already done grievous things. But Heretics, when they have not themselves the power of persecuting, stir up the men of this world that have power, and incline their minds for the exercising persecution, and inflame them with what persuasions they are able. And when they see these pursuing cruel measures against the lives of the Catholics, they as it were rest in the very fervour of the sun. Therefore it is well said now, *They rest at mid-day amidst the heaps of those that thirst with the winepresses being trodden*, in that they join the multitude of those whom they see already employed in hard measures and still thirsting after harder ones. And whilst the fervour of these satisfies their desires, they rest in the deeds of such as in the mid-day. It goes on;

Ver. 12. *They have caused men to groan out of the cities.*

lv. 68. Whereas cities (civitates) are so called from the people living together, (conviventes,) by the designation of 'cities' the churches of the true faith are not unfitly represented, which being settled in the different parts of the

[b] Psalms viii, lxxxi, and lxxxiv. bear the title, 'Pro torcularibus' in Vulg. Τοὺς τῶν ληνῶν, Sept. The word in the Hebrew is Gittith, which is retained in the title of the E. A. V. it is derived from 'Gath' and signifies 'of Gath.' The word for winepresses is 'Gittoth,' with which 'Gittith' is probably connected. See also Calmet's Com. in Vet. Test. in Ps. viii.

world constitute one Catholic Church, in which all the faithful thinking what is right concerning God live together in harmony. For this very harmony of people living together the Lord even by the distinguishing of places set forth in the Gospel, when being about to satisfy the people with five loaves, He bade them lie down by fifties or hundreds in ranks, so that the crowd of the faithful might take its food at once separate in places, and united in ways. For the rest of the jubilee is contained in a mystery of the number fifty, and fifty is carried twice to be brought to a hundred. Therefore because there is first rest from bad practice, that the soul may afterwards rest more perfectly in the thoughts, some lie down by fifties and some by hundreds, since there are some that already enjoy the rest of practice from evil deeds, and there are some that already enjoy the rest of the soul from evil thoughts. Wherefore since Heretics often, attaching themselves to the powerful evil-doers of this world, bear down upon the united life and harmony of the good, it is rightly said in this place, *They have caused men to groan from the cities.* Whom blessed Job rightly describes as 'men,' in that Heretics rather go about to put an end to those, who with perfect steps run in the way of God not effeminately and loosely but manfully; who when they see the wound of misbelief inflicted in the mind of the faithful little ones, always fall back to crying out and groaning. And hence it is rightly said, BOOK XVI.

And the soul of the wounded crieth, and God suffereth him not to go unavenged.

69. For the soul of the righteous is 'wounded,' when the faith of the weak is unsettled, unto whom this identical thing 'to cry' is to be now consumed for the downfall of another. But God does not suffer him to go unavenged, in that though by just appointment he suffers an unjust thing to be done, yet He does not let that unjust thing go unavenged which He has justly permitted to be done, seeing that at once by the injustice of the sons of perdition He smites certain sins of the Elect, which He sees to be in them, and yet by Eternal Justice does not neglect to smite the injustice of those smiters. It goes on, lvi.

Ver. 13. *They are rebellious against the light.*

Job 24, 13. Lit. vii. 70. Very often wicked people at once know the right things that they ought to follow, and yet neglect to follow what they know; and so they are 'rebellious against the light,' in that following their desires, they contemn the good that they know. They then that do wrong not from ignorance, but pride, present the shield of their exaltation against the darts of truth, that they may not be stricken in heart to their good. By which same pride of theirs it is brought to pass, that whereas they will not do the things that they know, neither do they now know the good they should do, but that their own blindness should utterly exclude them from the light of truth. And hence it is fitly subjoined,

They know not the ways thereof, nor have returned by the paths thereof.

lviii. 71. For they that are first rebels knowing it, are afterwards blinded so as not to know; as it is said of certain, Rom. 1, 21. *Because that when they knew God they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful.* Of whom it is added a little v. 28. while afterwards, *God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.* For because they would not glorify Him Whom they knew, being given over to a reprobate sense, they were left to this fate, that they should not any longer know how to estimate the evil things they did. And it is well said, *They know not the ways thereof, neither have returned by the paths thereof.* For a 'path' is narrower than a 'way.' Now those that care not to do the plainer good works, never attain to the understanding of the more refined. But Almighty God waited that they might go 'by the paths thereof.' And would that they had been minded even to have 'returned' by them, that the paths of life which they would not keep by innocency they might at least keep by repentance. Wherein of what great mercifulness are the bowels of God is shewn, in that those whom He sees departing from Him, He seeks that they may return. Hence after the sins of those doing wrong having been enumerated, He calls back the Syna- Jer. 3, 4. gogue by the voice of Prophecy, saying, *Therefore at least from this time cry unto Me, My Father, Thou art the guide of my youth.* It proceeds;

Ver. 14. *The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief.*

72. Whereas the murderer in the killing of his neighbours is wont to come upon them chiefly in the silence of the night, why is it that he is said in this place to 'rise with the light' in order to 'kill the poor and needy,' whilst 'in the night' he is described 'to be as a thief?' Now forasmuch as the letter in the bare words alone is not consistent with itself, we are called back for the investigating the hidden meanings of the Spirit. In Holy Scripture the 'morning' is sometimes used to be put for the coming of the Lord's Incarnation, sometimes for the coming of the henceforth dreadful and searching Judge, sometimes for the prosperity of the present life. Thus the coming of the Lord's Incarnation proved a 'morning,' as the Prophet saith, *The morning cometh, and also the night;* in that both the beginnings of the new light shone forth in the appearing of our Redeemer, and yet the shades of their misbelief were not cleared off from the hearts of the persecutors. Again, by the 'morning' the coming of the Judge is denoted. Whence it is said by the Psalmist, *Early I will destroy all the wicked of the land.* As also when personating the Elect, he says, *In the morning will I stand in Thy presence, and will look up.* Again, by the 'morning' this life's prosperity is represented; as where it is said by Solomon, *Woe to thee, O land, when thy King is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning.* For whereas the morning is the first part of the day and the evening the last, we ought not ever to be regaled by this life's prosperity which goes first, but by those things which at the end of the day, that is at the termination of the world, follow after. Thus those 'eat in the morning,' who by this world's successes are lifted up, and whilst they passionately interest themselves with present things, pay no heed to the things of the future. For *whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.* So the 'murderer rises up with the earliest dawn,' in that every wicked man is set up in the glory of the present life, and bears down the life of those, who whilst they thirst after the glory to follow, as it were anxiously look out to be filled in the evening. For the bad man in this world whilst seizing on the dignity of

Is. 21, 12.

Ps. 101, 8.

Ps. 5, 3.

Ecc. 10, 16.

1 John 3, 15.

Job 24, 14. 15. Myst. transitory power spreads himself out the more cruelly for the enacting of what is evil, in proportion as there is no man he loves in the bowels of charity. For as often as in the thoughts of his heart he is maddened against the good, so often does he kill the life of the innocent.

73. And if, God ordaining it, he suddenly lose the glory of the power he has gotten, he changes his place but not his disposition, for he directly falls away to that, which is subjoined, *And in the night is as a thief.* For in the night of his tribulation and sunkenness, though he has no power to put forth the hand of cruelty, yet to those whom he sees to be empowered, he recommends counsels of wickedness, and goes about hither and thither, and prompts whatever things he is able toward the injuring of the good. And he is rightly called 'as a thief,' because in all those very evil counsels of his he dreads lest he should be caught out. He then that towards the poor and needy is a murderer in the morning, in the night like a thief is hidden out of sight, in that every bad man, who in this life's prosperity by bearing down kills the life of the humble, being in adversity and abasement, by evil counsels does mischief in a concealed way, and what he is unable to accomplish by himself, that he puts in practice by attaching himself to the powerful ones of this world. It goes on;

Ver. 15. *The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me.*

lx. 74. There is nothing to hinder but that this may be understood even after the latter, seeing that he who desires to commit adultery, seeks out the dark. But whereas it is a sentence uttered against Heretics, it is meet that this thing which is declared be understood in a mystical sense. Thus

2 Cor. 2, 17. Paul says, *For we are not as many that adulterate*[1] *the word of God.* For the adulterer seeks not offspring, but pleasure in the act of carnal copulation. And every bad man, and that is also a slave to vain-glory, is rightly said to 'adulterate' the word of God, because by the sacred word of Revelation he desires not to beget children to God, but to exhibit his own knowledge. For he that is drawn to speak by lust of glory, bestows his pains rather on gratification than the production of children. And it is rightly added there, *No eye*

[1] Vulg. '*adulterantes.*'

shall see me; because the adultery which is committed in the interior is very hard indeed that it should be penetrated by the eye of man. Which same the froward soul commits with the more assurance, in proportion as it does not fear being seen by men, whom it may blush at. Moreover it is to be known that as he that commits adultery joins to himself unlawfully the flesh of another man's wife, so all heretics, while they carry off the faithful soul into their own error, are as it were bearing off another's wife, in this way; because the soul which is spiritually wedded to God and joined to Him as if in a kind of bridechamber of love, when by wicked persuasions it is led on into corruptness of doctrine, is as it were like the wife of another defiled by the corrupter. And it is well added; Book XVI.

And disguiseth his face.

75. It is for this reason that the adulterer 'disguises his face,' that he may not be known. Now every man who either in thinking or in acting lives badly, 'disguises his face,' because by corruptness in doctrine or in practice he is tending to this, that he should not be able to be recognised in the Judgment by Almighty God. Hence He shall say to certain persons at the end, *I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.* And what is the 'face' of the human heart, save the likeness of God? which same face the bad man 'disguiseth,' that he may not be able to be known, when his life he discomposes either by bad deeds, or by the error of misbelief. But every such person when he sees the righteous upheld by this world's good fortune, never ventures to prompt what is wrong to them, but if any storm of adversity falls upon those persons, he directly breaks out into words of pestilent persuasion. And hence it is added; lxi. Matt. 7, 23.

Ver. 16. *In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the day time; they know not the light.*

76. For what is there here denoted by the title of 'houses' but consciences, wherein we dwell, when we do any thing, busying ourselves with it? Whence it is said to one on being healed, *Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee;* i. e. henceforth, secure from the evil habit of sin, turn back to thy conscience, lxii. Luke 8, 39.

Job 24, 16. Myst. and be thou roused into the voice of preaching.' And so when in the present world the righteous are brightened by the day of prosperity, to those persons the leaders of false tenets are afraid to recommend what is wrong. But they search out counsels, with all care they await the abasement of their prosperity, that in the darkness of adversity they may by their persuading dig through the minds of those, to whom whilst living prosperously they never presumed to speak wrong things, whom as soon as they see under adversity they rise up and maintain, that no otherwise saving in desert of their sins those suffer such things; because loving the glory of the present life alone, the stroke they take for condemnation. So 'in the dark they dig through houses,' in that the minds of the good by their mere misfortune alone to corrupt is their endeavour. Now it is well said, *which they had marked in the day time*, in that when they saw the righteous to have been made to shine with the light of prosperity, because they were prevented speaking, they were only at liberty for concocting malevolent designs against them. But whether it be heretics or any bad persons, they rejoice when they see the righteous in a depressed condition, whereas when they see those break forth to the height of power for ruling, they are confounded, they are filled with fears, they are consumed with misery. And hence it is added,

Ver. 17. *If the morning suddenly appear, it is to them even as the shadow of death.*

lxiii. 77. For the wicked look for the afflicting of the righteous, and long to see them in distress, and 'in the dark they dig through houses,' when the heart of the innocent but weak ones they corrupt in the season of their casting down by the worst mode of discourse. But it commonly happens that when they see the good in a sunken state, on a sudden, by the secret appointment of God, any righteous one that seemed to be borne down is upheld by some share of the world's power, and the prosperity of the present life smiles on him, whom the darkness of adversity before overlaid. Which same prosperity of that man when the wicked behold, as it has been said, they are troubled. For directly they turn back to their own hearts, they bring back before their minds' eye whatever they remember themselves to have done amiss, they

fear for every particular sinful habit to be avenged in them, and by the same means by which he that receives power is made to shine, the bad man who dreads to be corrected is darkened in sorrow. And so it is well said, *If the morning suddenly appear, they think it is the shadow of death.* For 'the morning' is the mind of the righteous man, which quitting the darkness of its sin, now breaks out into the light of eternity, as it is said of Holy Church likewise; *Who is she that looketh forth as the morning?* Therefore in the same measure that every righteous person shining with the light of righteousness is in the present life reared to a height with honours, in the same measure before the eyes of the wicked comes the 'darkness of death,' in that they who remember that they have done bad things are in fear of being corrected. For they desire always to have a loose given them in their iniquities, to live free from correction, and from sin to have delight; whose fatal mirth is itself appropriately described in the words that are directly introduced, Book XVI. Song of Sol. 6, 10.

And they walk so in darkness, as in the light.

78. For with a froward mind they delight in deeds of wickedness, through their sin they are day by day being dragged to punishment, and are full of assurance. Hence it is said by Solomon, *And there are wicked men that are as secure as if they had the deeds of the righteous.* Concerning whom it is written again, *Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the most wicked doings.* Thus 'they walk in darkness as in the light,' in that they so delight in the night of sin as if the light of righteousness spread around them. Or otherwise, whereas darkness not inappropriately represents the present life, wherein the consciences of other men are not seen, whilst our light is the eternal land, in which when we look at faces, our hearts within us we mutually see; and because the wicked so love the present life, and embrace these times of exile, as if they already reigned in their native country, it is rightly said, *They walk in darkness as in the light*, in that they are as full of gladness in the present state of blindness, as if they already enjoyed the light of the eternal country. It goes on; lxiv. Eccl. 8, 14.

He is light above the face of the water.

79. From the plural number he returns to the singular, lxv.

Job 24, 18. Lit. because most frequently one person begins what is bad, and numbers by imitating him follow after, but the fault is primarily his, who to the bad men following after furnished examples of wickedness; and hence the sentence frequently returns to him who was the leader in sin. Now the surface of water is carried hither and thither by the breath of the air, and not being steadied with any fixedness is put in motion every where. And so the mind of the wicked man is 'lighter than the surface of water,' in that every breath of temptation that touches it, draws it on without any retarding of resistance. For if we imagine the unstable heart of any bad man, what do we discover but a surface of water set in the wind? For that man one while the breath of anger drives on, now the breath of pride, now the breath of lust, now the breath of envy, now the breath of falsehood forces along. And so he is 'light above the surface of the water,' whom every wind of error when it comes drives before it. Whence too it Ps. 83, 13. is well said by the Psalmist, *O my God, make them like a wheel, as the stubble before the wind.* For the wicked are 'made like a wheel,' in that being sent into the round of labour, whilst the things that are before they neglect, and those which ought to be given up they follow, in the hind parts they are lifted up, and in the fore parts they fall. And they are likewise rightly compared to 'stubble before the face of the wind,' in that, when the breath of temptation comes upon them, having no principle of gravity to rest upon, they are only lifted up to be dashed to the ground, and they often account themselves of some merit in proportion as the blast of error bears them on high. It goes on;

Let their portion be cursed in the earth; and let him not walk by the way of the vineyards.

lxvi. 80. Whoever in the present life does what is right and meets with misfortunes, is seen indeed to travail in adversity, but for the blessing of the everlasting inheritance he is finished complete; but whoever does what is bad and yet meets with good fortune, and does not even by the bountifulness of blessings withhold himself from wicked deeds, is seen indeed to prosper, but is tied fast by the bond of everlasting cursing. Hence it is rightly said now, *Let their portion be cursed in the earth*, in that though he is blessed for a time,

yet he is held fast in the bond of cursing. Concerning whom too it is fitly added, *He walketh not by the way of the vineyards.* For ‘ the way of the vineyards,’ is the rightness of the Churches. Wherein nothing hinders but that we understand either the heretic or every carnal man, because ‘ the way of the vineyards,’ i. e. the rightness of the Churches, is parted with, when either the right faith or the right rule of just living is not held. For he ‘ walks by the way of the vineyards,’ who taking to heart the preaching of the Holy Catholic Church, deviates neither from the right line of faith nor of good deeds. Since to ‘ walk in the way of the vineyards’ is to behold the Fathers of Holy Church as hanging clusters of the vine, whose words whilst he heeds in the toils of the journey, he is intoxicated with the love of Eternity. It goes on; Book XVI.

Ver. 19. *Let him pass to excessive heat from the snow waters.*

81. Iniquity is on this account likened to cold, because the mind that sins it binds up with insensibility. Hence it is written; *As a fountain has made her waters cold, so she has made her wickedness cold.* Contrariwise charity is ‘ heat,’ in this respect that it fires the soul it fills. Of which ‘ heat’ it is written, *Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.* And there are some who while they shun the cold of their wickednesses come to true faith or to the wearing of sanctity, but because they presume on their own faculties for perceiving more than should be, oftentimes in the faith which they receive they are minded to pry curiously into the things that they do not take in, so as to be held fast in God rather by reason than by faith. But because the mind of man has not power to dive into the mysteries of God, all that they cannot get to the bottom of by reason, they care not to believe, and by overmuch investigation they fall into error. So these, when they did not as yet believe, or were still busied for works of wickedness, were ‘ snow waters;’ but when abandoning carnal deeds, in the faith to which they have been brought they aim to dive deeper than they have capacity for, they are hot beyond what they ought to be. And so touching this wicked kind of person the sentence of one prophesying only and not wishing the thing is lxvii. Jer. 6, 7. Mat. 24, 12.

Job 24, 20. Lit. rightly delivered. *Let him pass to overmuch heat from the snow waters.* As if it were said in plain speech; 'he that is not restrained in humility under the fetters of self-discipline, from his unbelief, or from the coldness of bad practice, through immoderate wisdom falls into error. Whence too the great Preacher getting quit of this excessive heat of too refined wisdom from the hearts of his disciples saith well, Rom. 12, 3. *Not to be wise of himself above that he ought to be wise; but to be wise unto sobriety.* Lest perchance excessive heat might destroy those, of whom 'snow waters,' i. e. unbelief, or the fruits of deadened actions, held possession in the way to die. And because it is very difficult for him who accounts himself wise to bring down his mind to humility and believe those that preach right things, and reject the view of his own wrong thought, it is rightly said;

Ver. 19. *And his sin even to hell.*

lxviii. 82. For sin is 'brought even to hell,' which before the end of the present life is not by chastening reformed unto 1 John 5, 16. repentance. Of which same sin it is said by John, *There is a sin unto death, I do not say that he shall pray for it.* For 'a sin unto death' is a sin even until death in this way, that the pardon of that sin is sought in vain which is not corrected here. Concerning which same it is yet further subjoined;

Ver. 20. *Let mercy forget him.*

Almighty God's mercy is said to 'forget him,' who has forgotten Almighty God's justice, in that whoever does not fear Him now as just, can never find him merciful afterward. Which same sentence is not only held out against him, who abandons the preachings of true faith, but against him likewise, who being in the right faith lives a carnal life, in that the vengeance of eternal condemnation is not got quit of, whether sin lie in faith or practice. For though the kind of condemnation be unequal, yet guilt which is not wiped away by repentance, there is no means supplied for the absolving thereof. It goes on;

The worm is his sweetness.

lxix. 83. Whoever desires to make his way prosperous in this world, to surpass the rest of the world, to swell high with substance and honours, to this man no doubt worldly busi-

ness is a delight, and repose a labour. For he is very much tired if the business of the world be lacking wherewith to be tired. Now because it belongs to the nature of worms to be put in motion unceasingly every moment, restlessness of thoughts is not unjustly denoted by the name of 'worms.' And so 'the worm is the sweetness' of the wicked soul, in that he is fed to his satisfaction from the same source whence he is unceasingly agitated in restlessness. Moreover it may be that by the title of the 'worm' the flesh may be more plainly denoted. Hence it is said further on, *How much less man that is a worm? or the son of man which is a worm?* And so of every one that is full of lust and devoted to the pleasures of the flesh, how great is the blindness is shewn, when it is said, *The worm is his sweetness.* For what is our flesh but 'rottenness' and 'the worm?' And whosoever pants with carnal desires, what else does he but love 'the worm?' For what the substance of the flesh is, our graves bear witness. What parent, what faithful friend can bear to touch the flesh of one however beloved fraught with worms? And so when the flesh is lusted after, let it be considered what it is when lifeless, and it is understood what it is that is loved. For nothing has so much efficacy to subdue the appetite of carnal desire, as for every one to consider, what that which he loves alive will be when dead. For when we consider the corruption of the flesh, we see in a moment, that when the flesh is unlawfully lusted after, corruption is desired. Therefore it is well said of the mind of the lustful man, *the worm is his sweetness*, in that he who is on fire with the desire of carnal corruption, pants after the stink of rottenness.

Book XVI.

c. 17, 14. and 25, 6.

All this, as I remember that I promised in the beginning of this third part, I have run over in brief, that the things which follow after in this work[c], as they are involved in great obscurity, may with God's aid be more fully gone into.

B. xi.

[c] Opere. Ben. notes that some Mss. read 'corpore,' which would mean 'Volume.'

THE FOURTH PART.

BOOK XVII.

What remains of the twenty-fourth chapter beginning from the middle of verse 20, together with chapters twenty-five and twenty-six entire, he sets forth chiefly in a moral sense.

1. ALLEG. As often as in the history of the holy man we betake ourselves in a new book to unravel the mystery of the typical explanation, it must be either from that man's name or course of suffering that we mainly draw out the mystical interpretation, so that after the manner of dwelling houses, whilst we set forth a superscription of the title on the very front of the door post, whereas it is known whose house it is, one may enter with greater security. Now I remember that I have often said that blessed Job, both by his course of suffering and his name, marked out the sufferings of our Redeemer, and of His Body, i. e. Holy Church. For 'Job' is by interpretation 'Grieving.' And who else is represented in this grieving one saving He, concerning Whom it is
Is. 53, 4. written, *Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our*
ib. 5. *sorrows.* Concerning Whom again it is written, *And with His bruise we are healed?* But his friends bear the likeness of heretics, who, as we have often said already, while they set themselves to defend, only offend God. Thus let the holy man by words and wounds so tell things of his own as at the same time to set forth ours also, and most often, by the spirit of prophecy, relate things to come, surmount things present, yet sometimes so tell of those present as to be silent touching those future. The keeping then of this exercise of discernment being understood in accordance with the altering of his voice, let our understanding likewise turn about, that it may agree the more truly with his ideas in proportion as it also shifts itself with his accents. Thus by the preceding words the holy man, in sentences eloquently formed by the

art of wisdom, set forth the offences of the bad man of whatever kind, and represented how damnable his conduct was, of whose punishment he directly adds, saying, Book XVII. Lit. Moral.

Let him not be in remembrance; let him be crushed like an unfruitful stump.

ii. 2. For he is not brought back into the 'remembrance' of his Creator, whosoever to the very end of his life is in subjection to evil habits. Since if the recollection of the regard from Above did make itself felt on such an one, assuredly it would recall him from his wickedness. For his deserts require that he should be utterly blotted out from his Maker's remembrance. But it is to be borne in mind that God can never strictly be said to 'remember;' for One Who cannot forget, in what way is it possible for Him to remember? But whereas it is our way that those whom we remember we embrace, but those whom we forget we part far from, after the usage of man God is both said to 'remember,' when He bestows gifts, and to forget, when He forsakes one in guilt. But because He weighs all things, views all without any alternating of intermission, He both remembers the good, whom still He never forgets, and no wise remembers the bad, whom nevertheless in judgment He does ever behold. For He as it were returns to the recollection of the good, which same nevertheless He never quitted, and as it were He never regards the bad, whose deeds howsoever He has an eye on, but reserves for the last scene the judgment of condemnation thereupon. For hence it is written, *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.* Prov. 15, 3. Hence it is said by the Psalmist, *The face of the Lord is upon them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.* Ps. 34, 16. Therefore the persons for Him to punish He does regard, but those very persons before He did not see, in that He 'knows them not.' For He shall say to some at the end, *I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* Luke 13, 27. Thus, in a wonderful way, He both beholds and forgets the life of bad men, in that those whom by severity of sentence He judges, as regards the remembrance of mercy He is ignorant of.

3. And these same, because they do not come into His remembrance, like an unfruitful stump are broken to pieces

Job 24, 21. Moral. by His judgment. For the earth supported them with a temporal outfitting, the shower of preaching poured down on them from above. But because their life never put forth the fruit of good works, the husbandman in anger cut it clean away, that according to the sentence of Truth it might not cumber the space, which another may occupy for fruit. Of Matt. 3, 10. Luke 3, 9. which same 'unfruitful stump' it is said by John, *And now also the axe is laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire.* But in this place, in order that the eternal punishments of the lost sinner may be denoted, the tree is not said to be cut away, but to be *broken to pieces*, in that the death indeed of the flesh cuts off the reprobate, but the punishment ensuing breaks them in pieces. For here it is as it were cut down, when he is severed from the present life. But in hell it is broken in pieces, when he is tortured with everlasting damnation. But the holy man, as he set forth the strict punishment of the froward one, at once falls back to the sin, that by the immensity of the unjustness he may effectually teach that that excessive damnation of him was not unjust. It goes on;

Ver. 21. *For he fed the barren and her that beareth not, and to the widow he did not do good.*

iii. 4. Who is it in this place that is denominated 'barren' saving the flesh, which while it goes after things present alone is not able to engender good thoughts? and who is styled 'a widow' but the soul, which same because the Maker was minded to unite to Himself, He came to the marriage chamber of the carnal womb, as the Psalmist Ps 19, 5. testifies, who saith, *Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber?* And she is rightly called 'a widow,' in that her Husband underwent death in her behalf, and now in the retreats of heaven hidden from her eyes as in the tract of another region He lives. Thus the wicked man 'feeds the barren' and scorns to 'do good to the widow,' because in obeying the desires of the flesh, he makes little of the care of the soul and its life. For with the whole bent and with every effort he considers how without necessities of any kind the flesh which is to die may be made to hold on, and he is indifferent to concern himself for the life of the soul,

which either in death or in bliss most surely lives for evermore. Now it is rightly done that when it is said, *He fed the barren*, it is directly added, *and her that beareth not.* For certain women we know from sacred history were found ‘ barren,’ but yet in the end of their days brought forth. But the flesh is not only called *barren*, but also *she that beareth not*, in that of her own wit not even at the last is she capable of begetting good thoughts. For from her own vigour she is now already going off, and yet things transitory she still ceases not to long for, and being now spent of original force, is well nigh thrown off by that very world which she loves, yet by mischievous endeavour still strives to acquire what is temporal. She now no longer has the ability to do wicked things, yet does not a whit cease to mind in thought even the things which she does not in act. Rightly therefore is she called not only ‘ barren,’ but also ‘ one that beareth not,’ in that of her own wit, as we said, for the offspring of good thought, not even when she has become powerless does she conceive.

5. Which same may likewise be understood of heretical persons preaching. For every single preacher of error, while he teaches a people set without the pale of the Church’s unity, is surely ‘ feeding the barren, and her that cannot bear,’ seeing that he is bestowing the serviceableness of his labour upon her, who never makes any return of spiritual fruits. ‘ Neither does he do good to the widow,’ forasmuch as for that Holy Church Universal, whose Husband suffered the adverse treatment of death, he scorns to live to and to serve. For to ‘ do good to the widow’ is to take much pains in the consoling of her, who by the love of her dead Husband is crushed to the ground. And hence by the voice of the Psalmist this same widow, i. e. Holy Church, makes complaint, saying, *I looked for comforters, but I found none.* Since then only does she ‘ find a comforter,’ when from that death which her husband underwent, she beholds many within herself arise to life. Now very often the preacher of error is allied with the rich of this world, who for this reason, that they strain over earthly employments, are too blind to detect the crafty tricks of the things delivered, and whereas they go about to be powerful without, they are taken without

Ps. 69, 20.

Job 24, 22. labour by the noose of froward preaching. Hence too it is added;

Moral. Ver. 22. *He took away the mighty in his might.*

iv. 6. Since in the might of his wickedness the mighty he severally takes away, whilst by the craftiness of his error he carries off the great ones of this world. In opposition to

1 Cor. 1, 27. whom it is said by Paul, *God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty.* Now the 'might' of the corrupt preacher is the high-flown science of his speaking, puffed up with which he despises all the rest of the world, and in contempt of all men, as being pre-eminently proficient in himself, he swells big. Who whilst thinking what is great of himself, and not knowing what is true of God, is parted far from knowledge of the faith, and yet endeavours to make himself appear a preacher thereof. Whence it is further added;

And when he standeth, he will not believe his life.

v. 7. Every evil preacher 'standeth' in this world, so long as he lives in an earthly body. But he refuses to 'believe his life,' because he is too proud to open his eyes to what is true relating to God. For he would 'believe his life,' if he had right notions concerning the Substance of his Creator. These things, then, we were describing above as spoken of every bad man, but we suddenly made the meaning turn to the preacher of error. Whence it is to be noted, that we are so drawn on to the special case as not yet in any wise to be quite taken off from the general. For every bad man, even if he seem to maintain the faith in the bosom of the Church Universal, 'standeth and believeth not his life,' because they are right things indeed which by faith he understands of his Creator, yet the works of faith he cares not to maintain; and he is convicted of unbelief, in that, even from that which he sets forth as his creed, by his way of

1 John 2, 4. living he is condemned. For hence it is said by John, *He that saith he knoweth God, and keepeth not His command-*

Tit. 1, 16. *ments, is a liar.* Hence Paul saith, *They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him.* Hence James

Jam. 2, 20. 26. saith, *Faith without works is dead.* But amidst all this the Creator by a wonderful economy of counsel at once has an eye to offences, and bestows periods of living, that the

lengthened portions of temporal life may to the person either being converted be turned into the furtherance of reward, or not being converted to the heightening of condemnation. Hence it is yet further subjoined, BOOK XVII.

Ver. 23. *God hath given unto him room for repentance, and he abuseth it in pride.*

8. Whosoever commits sin and lives, such a person Divine Appointment for this reason bears with in iniquity, that it may withhold him from iniquity. But he that is borne with for a longer time, and yet is not withholden from iniquity, is vouchsafed indeed the benefit of the patience Above, yet with the chains of his guilt is by that very benefit binding himself the tighter. For because the times of repentance vouchsafed he diverts to sin, the strict Judge in the end converts the instances of mercy bestowed into punishment. Hence it is said by Paul; *Or knowest thou not that the longsuffering of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.* Hence Isaiah saith, *For the child shall die an hundred years old, but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.* As though he deterred us in plain words, saying, 'The life of a child indeed is drawn to a great length, in order that he may be corrected of childish doings, but if he be not even by length of time restrained from the commission of sin, this very length of life, which he received in pitifulness, is made to grow to him into an aggravation of cursing.' Whence it is necessary that the longer time that we see ourselves to be waited for, we fear the very seasons of pitifulness before granted[1] as the grounds of condemnation, lest by the clemency of the Judge the punishment of the sinner should be heightened, and by the same means whereby any one might have been rescued from death, he should tend to death in a manner the more disastrous. Which is for this reason very often brought to pass, because the eye of the mind is not in the least degree weaned from things present. For the sinner is careless to regard the ways of the Redeemer, and so he grows old in his own paths without stopping. Hence it is added; vi. Rom. 2, 4. 5. Is. 65, 20.

[1] prærogatæ.

Job 24, 23. *For his eyes are upon his ways.*

vii. Moral. 9. For the sinner 'regards his own ways,' because he sets himself to mind only, to have an eye only for, things which may stand him in stead for temporal advantage. Thus it is Phil. 2, 21. hence Paul saith, *All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.* For the way of the highminded is pride; the way of the robber, avarice; the way of the lecherous, carnal concupiscence. Thus every bad man bends his eyes down on his own ways, in that he is intent on vicious pursuits alone, that by these he may satisfy his mind. Whence it is said by Solomon, *The eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth;* because that only they regard with the whole bent of the heart, whereby they may attain to the end of earthly desire. Now the sinner would never fix the gaze of his looking on earth, if he lifted up the eyes of the mind to the holy paths of his Redeemer. Whence it is again said Eccl. 2, 14. by Solomon, *The wise man's eyes are in his head;* in this way, viz. that with undivided intentness the wise man regards Him, of Whom he reflects by faith that he is a member. For these ways of man's walk and conversation, he had Ps. 119, 15. deemed it little worth to have in his eye, who said, *I will meditate in Thy statutes, and have respect unto Thy ways.* As if he gave his word in plain terms, saying, 'The things which are mine own I henceforth eschew the seeing of, in that by the path of the imitating of Thee I burn to go on in the steps of behaviour.' For he who henceforth withstands the present world, by the continual inciting of love presents the ways of his Redeemer to the eyes of the heart, that so the mind may eschew what is prosperous, be in readiness for what is adverse, desire nought that soothes down, dread nought that is supposed to dismay, account sorrow joy, estimate the delights of the present life as the ills of woe, not fear the diminutions of a state of scorn, but thereby seek room for enduring glory. For these ways Truth shewed to the eyes of those that were following Him, when He said, John 12, 26. *If any man serve Me, let him follow Me.* To these ways he recalled the swelling hearts of the Disciples, when they were already seeking room for glory, but knew not the pathway of that glory, saying, *Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?* For they had been seeking the

height of that session with Him on the right hand and on the left hand, but how great the narrowness of the pathway thereunto they did not see; and hence the cup of the Passion is at once presented to their eyes as a thing for them to imitate, that, surely, if they were making for the joys of exaltedness, they should first find the way of humility. And therefore because the sinner is careless to have an eye to the ways of God, but is bent on those only wherein he may be made to delight in a carnal manner, it is rightly said in this place, *For his eyes are upon his ways.* It proceeds; Book XVII.

Ver. 24. *They are exalted for a little while, but they shall not hold on.*

10. The glory of bad men, whilst it is for the most part extended into a multitude of years, is by the minds of the weak reckoned to be long and as it were stable; but when an instantaneous end cuts it off, surely it proves to its face that it was short, because the end by putting a limit makes it known that that which was capable of passing away was little. And so 'they are exalted for a little while, and do not hold on,' because from the mere circumstance that they seek to appear high, they are by self-exalting made far removed from the true essence of God. For they are not able to hold on, because they are severed from the solid basis of the Eternal Essence, and they undergo this first ruining, that by glorying in self they fall in themselves. For hence it is said by the Psalmist, *Thou castedst them down, when they were lifted up;* because they are brought down within, in proportion as they arise wrongly without. Regarding this shortness of temporal glory, he saith again; *I have seen the wicked above measure exalted, and lifted up like a cedar of Libanus; I passed by, and lo, he was gone.* Hence again he saith, *For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be.* Hence James says, *For what is your life? it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time.* Hence the Prophet reflecting on the shortness of carnal glory, tells it forth, saying, *All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of hay.* For the power of the wicked is likened to the 'flower of hay,' because the glory of the flesh, whilst it shines bright, it falls, whilst it is exalted in itself, cut off by a sudden end it is brought to a close. For in the same way by viii. Ps. 73, 18. Ps. 37, 35. ib. 10. Is. 40, 6.

Job 24. 24. Moral. the blowing of breezes the stubble is caught on high, but by an instantaneous fall it is brought back to earth below. Thus the smoke is lifted up to the clouds, but suddenly whilst swelling out it is scattered to nought. Thus the vapour from beneath thickening lifts itself on high, but the ray of the sun when risen clears it away, as though it had not been. Thus on the surface of the herbs the moisture of the dew of night is sprinkled, but by the sudden heat of the light of day it is dried away. Thus the foamy bubbles of water, raised on showers beginning, come forth racing from within, but being burst asunder they come to nought the more quickly in proportion as being inflated they are raised higher, and when they grow to a head, so as to appear, in growing they make it that they should 'not hold on.' Therefore concerning the wicked that are swoln with the exaltation of temporal glory, and yet not enduring with any stedfastness in this glory, let it be rightly said, *they are exalted for a little while, but they shall not hold on.* Of whom it is yet further added;

And they shall be brought low as all things, and shall be taken away.

ix. 11. Such should be the advancement of contemplation, that it should be carried off from few things to the taking a view of many, from many to taking a view of all things, so that being led forth step by step it should advance, and whilst judging all things transitory should by comprehending itself grow forth well nigh incomprehensibly. Hence the holy man, whilst he was sifting the glory and the failing of the wicked, stretched to 'all things' presently the eye of the mind, saying, *they shall be brought low as all things, and shall be taken away;* 'all things' earthly assuredly. As though he said in plain words; 'They cannot any way stand, because the very things flee away as well whereon they rest for support, and while they are in love with things temporal, along with these by the currency of time they run to an end.' But it may be asked, whereas it is said by Eccl. 1, 4. Solomon, *One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth for ever;* why does blessed Job declare that 'all things are brought low, and taken away?' Yet this we easily sift out, if we keep distinct

how earth and heaven either pass away or remain. For both these in respect of that figure which they now have pass away, yet in respect of their essence they are held in being without end. Hence it is said by Paul, *For the fashion of this world passeth away.* Hence Truth saith by Itself, *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.* Hence it is told John by the voice of the Angel, *There shall be a new heaven and a new earth.* Which indeed are not to be created other things, but these very same are renewed. And thus heaven and earth at once 'pass away' and 'shall be,' seeing that both by fire from that fashion which they now have they are clean wiped out, and yet in their own nature are ever preserved. Hence it is said by the Psalmist, *Thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed.* Which same final changing of themselves they do now announce to us by those very successions, whereby for our services they unceasingly shift about. For the earth by the dryness of winter falls off from its fashion, by the moisture of spring it is made green. Heaven is every day overlaid by the darkness of night, and renewed by the brightness of day. Hence, then, hence let every believer gather that these things both perish, and yet by renewal are restored, which it is plain are now perpetually as it were from decay being refitted. In the midst of all this then the holy man, whilst he beholds the course of the wicked, makes it known with what a visitation they are one day to come to nought, when he forthwith adds;

Book XVII.

1 Cor. 7, 31.

Mat. 24, 35.

Rev. 21, 1.

Ps. 102, 26.

And as the tops of ears of corn they shall be crushed.

12. For the tops of the ears of corn are the beards; now the beards come out joined in an ear of corn, but going on growing little by little they are separated from one another bristly and rough. Thus, verily, thus, as to this world's glory do the evil-minded rich ones rise up. For by a fellowship of nature they are joined to one another, but going on increasing they are in turn divided against one another. For one looks down upon another, and a second is inflamed against a third with the torches of envy; they then who by the swelling of the mind separate themselves from the unity of charity, as it were after the way of beards stand bristling against one another. What then might I have called the evilminded

x.

Job 25, 2. Ver. 2. *Dominion and fear are with Him; Who maketh peace in His high places.*

Lit. xii. 16. As though he expressed himself in plain words; 'He only truly terrifies the hearts of mortals, Who by the power of His Divine nature truly possesses these.' For what terror does the power of man infuse, which knows not when it may lack the right of that power? Now it is rightly said, *He maketh peace in His high places.* Because there are many things at variance with themselves below, but they run answerably to the harmonious fulness of things above, and by the causing of the interior peace it is brought to pass, that oftentimes the things that are without are ordered without peace. Thus the good, Almighty God is advancing to merit, when He permits the bad to rage against their life; and things above are made to fit together in harmony, whilst those below are thrown into confusion; because in the heavenly world He joins His Elect to the choirs of the Angels by the same means, whereby in the earthly and lowest scene of things, He bears the practices of lost sinners opposing His behests.

17. But herein it is of interest to us to enquire, if the highest peace is maintained 'in the high places,' what that is Dan. 10, 13. which is said to Daniel by the Angel, *I am come for thy words; but the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief* v. 20. *princes, came to help me.* And a little afterward; *And now will I return to fight with the prince of the Persians. For when I was going forth there appeared the prince of the Greeks coming.* Whom else then but Angels does he call the 'princes' of the nations, that could have had the power to resist him as he went forth? Accordingly what peace can there be 'in the high places,' if even among the Angelical spirits themselves also there is a conflict of warring carried on, who are always standing present to the view of Truth? But because there are fixed charges of the Angels set to superintend the regulating of the several particular nations, when the practices of the subject peoples deserve the assistance of the presiding spirits against one another, the spirits themselves that are set in charge are said to come against one another. Thus the Angel that spake to Daniel is known

to have been appointed over the captives of the Israelitish People established in Persia, but Michael is ascertained to be the ruler of those who remained in the land of Judæa from among the same people. And hence it is said a little afterwards to Daniel by this same Angel; *And there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael, your prince.* Concerning whom he says this too which we have before said, *but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me.* Who whereas he is never said 'to be with,' but to 'come to help,' is plainly seen to be set over that people which was held captive in another part. What then is it for the Angel to say, *I am come for thy words, but the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me*, but to tell his doings to those under him? As if he said in plain terms; 'The claims[1] of thy prayers indeed demand that the Israelitish People should be loosed from the yoke of their captivity, but there is still in that same people that which must be purged by the dominion of the Persians; so that touching the liberation of that people the prince of Persia should by rights withstand me, though to thy prayers the tears of those too who were left in Judæa come in aid.' Whence he subjoins that too which we said; *But, lo, Michael, your prince, came to help me.* And when he goes forth in order to fight against the prince of the Persians, there appeareth to him the prince of the Greeks coming towards him. By which circumstance it is implied that against the Greeks too Judæa had been guilty of somewhat, on account of whom without a doubt it was that he withstood the rescuing of her. So the Angel hears effectually the prayers of the Prophet, but the prince of Persia withstands, because though the life of the righteous one making supplication already claims the rescue of the People, yet the life of that same People still withstands, that whereas those that had been brought into captivity were not yet completely purified, Persia should rightfully have the dominion over them still. Michael gives aid, but the prince of Greece comes to battle, because that lengthened captivity of the People suffering oppression might indeed have merited pardon, but to the benefit of their liberation that also stood opposed, which they had done wrong against the Greeks. Therefore it is rightly said that the Angels come against each other, because

Book XVII.

v. 21.

[1] merita

Job 25, 3. Lit. the claims of the nations under them are reciprocally at odds with one another. For the lofty Spirits that are princes to those nations never fight in behalf of those that act unjustly, but justly judge and try their deeds. And when either the guilt or guiltlessness of each separate nation is brought into the debate of the Court Above, the ruling Spirit of that nation is said to have won in the conflict or not to have won; the one identical victory of all of whom, however, is the Supreme Will of their Maker above them, which Will whilst they ever have before their eyes, what they have not the power they have not the mind to obtain. Therefore it is well said, *Who maketh peace in His high places.* It follows;

Ver. 3. *Is there any number of His soldiers?*

xiii. 18. In the cognizance of human reason there is not any number of the spirits above, in that it cannot tell how great is that concourse of the Invisible Host, whereof it is said by Dan. 7, 10. Daniel, *Thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.* The number of the citizens above is represented as infinite and definite, in order that that which relatively to God is capable of being numbered may be shewn relatively to man to be incapable of being numbered. Though it is one thing 'to stand before,' and another thing to 'minister to.' For those Powers stand before Him without a doubt, which never go forth for the communicating things to men. But those 'minister to' Him, who come for discharging the offices of bearers of tidings; yet these same beings also, by the act of contemplation, are not withdrawn from the interior world. And because they are more in number that 'minister' than those that preeminently 'stand before Him,' the number of those so 'standing in presence' is represented as being definite, but of those that 'minister' as indefinite.

19. Now the Angelical spirits we rightly call 'the soldiers' of God, because we are not unaware that those war against the powers of the air, which same conflicts however they carry on not by labour but by authority; for whatsoever thing, in acting against impure spirits, they desire for, by the aid of Him Who ruleth all things, they are equal to. So of this army when our King was born it is written, Luke 2, 13. *And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host.*

Unto which same heavenly host the number of the Elect of men too is joined, who by the lofty aspirations of the mind are set free from the bondage of an earthly conversation. Concerning whom it is said by Paul, *No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life.* Which same though now they be shewn few in number, yet in the invisible country they reign innumerably many, in that though by comparison with the evil-minded they are few, yet in the concourse of their assemblage they cannot be any way measured. But because the goodness of those soldiers is set firm not by their own powers, but by the inspiration of grace from Above, it is rightly added, BOOK XVII.

And upon whom doth not His light arise?

20. For 'the light' of God is preventing grace, which if it never arose of free gift in our heart, assuredly our mind would remain dim in the darkness of its sins. And hence it is added; xiv.

Ver. 4. *Can a man be justified being compared with God? or can he be found clean that is born of a woman?*

21. This verse is spoken above by blessed Job, and is now repeated in the upbraiding of him; since every just man is just by illumination from God, not by comparison with God. For man's righteousness when compared with the Maker is unrighteousness, since, even although man had held fast in his own estate of creation, the creature could never be equalled to the Creator. To which creature howsoever, unto heavier burthens of deficiency, there accrued sin also, which the serpent by plotting brought in, and woman proving frail recommended. Hence now, forasmuch as man is born by the agency of woman who is made subject to sin, the frailty of the first guilt is inherited in the offspring; and because the branch of the human race was made rotten in the root, it does not hold up in the greenness of its creation. Hence it is rightly said now, *Can a man be justified being compared with God? or can he be found clean that is born of a woman?* As if it were expressed in plain terms, 'Let not man entertain pride against his Creator, let him reflect whence he came hither, and understand what he is.' But observe, there are those that when by the gift of the Spirit they are holpen against the frailty of their flesh, xv.

Job 25, 5. Lit. are made to erect themselves, gleam forth in virtues, yea, flash out in the marvels of miraculous signs as well, yet is there no man who may pass through life free from sin, so long as he bears upon him flesh of corruption. Whence it is yet further added;

Ver. 5. *Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in His sight.*

xvi. 22. What is denoted by 'the moon' but the whole Church together? what by 'the stars' but the souls of the several persons that live rightly? who amidst the practices of wicked men, whilst they are conspicuous by rare virtues, as it were shine in the darkness of night. Whence likewise it Phil. 2, 15. is said by Paul to the disciples; *Among whom ye shine like lights in the world.* For that Holy Church is represented by the designation of 'the moon,' the Prophet bears witness, Hab. 3, 11. saying, *The sun was lifted up, and the moon stood in her order.* For on 'the sun being lifted up, the moon is established in her order,' in that on our Lord ascending into the heavens, Holy Church is thereupon made strong in the authoritative function of preaching. And that by the title of 'stars' the Elect are represented, Paul again informs us, 1 Cor. 15, 41. by saying, *For one star differeth from another star in glory.* So 'the moon doth not shine, and the stars are not clean in His sight,' because neither doth Holy Church by her own power shine forth in so many miracles, except the gifts of preventing grace fall in showers upon her, nor are the minds of the several persons that live rightly clean of the stains of sinful practices, if they be judged apart from pity; because in the eyes of the strict Judge every single individual his own proneness to corruption doth pollute, unless the grace of One sparing day by day wipe this away. For the mind of the Elect strives to go forth to the liberty of righteousness, but is still bound and tied with the fetters of frailty, and it longs indeed perfectly to get the better of offences, but so long as it is fettered by the corruption of the flesh, it is tied with the chains thereof, even when it would not be. Hence therefore let him collect with what a load of sins they are borne down, who neglect to war against the same, if not even they entirely get the better of evil doing, who strenuously fight against it. And hence it is said, *Behold even to the moon, and it*

shineth not, and the stars are not pure in His sight; it is directly added;

Ver. 6. *How much more is man rottenness, and the son of man a worm?*

xvii. 23. As if it were in plain words; 'If those very persons also cannot be void of contagion, who amidst the darkness of the present life shine bright by virtuous attainments, with what guilt of wickedness are they bound, who still live after the flesh? If those persons cannot be free from sin, who are already walking in the way of heavenly desires, what they who still lie under the loads of sinful habits? who whilst they are abandoned to the gratifications of their fleshly part, still bear the yoke of rottenness? Hence Peter saith; *And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* Hence it is said by Isaiah, *Upon the land of My people shall come up thorns and briars; how much more upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city.* For by 'the land of His People,' the Lord meaneth the mind of all of the Elect. Upon which He tells of 'thorns and briars coming up;' because He sees that not even that very mind is free from the prickles of bad habits. But 'the house of joy in the joyous city' is the mind of the wicked, which whilst it neglects to regard the punishments that are destined to come, in the gratification of the flesh going away from itself, revels in empty mirth. Thus he saith; *Upon the land of My people shall come up thorns and briars, how much more upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city.* As if He said in plain words; If evil habits sink low even the minds of those, who for desire of the heavenly country put themselves to pain, what guilty courses are they brought under, who without any apprehension abandon themselves in the gratification of the flesh?

1 Pet. 4, 18.

Is. 32, 13.

24. But it is a point to be noticed in his discourse how Bildad observed the order of our creation and of our birth, in that he calls 'man' not 'a worm,' but 'rottenness,' but 'the son of man' 'a worm.' For the first parent of the human race was 'man,' not 'the son of man;' from whom whosoever came forth, was not only 'man,' but 'the son of man' as well. As then from man springs the son of man, so from rottenness springs the worm. Whence man is rightly called

Job 26, 1, 2. Lit. ‘rottenness,’ but the son of man ‘a worm.’ For the first man was ‘rottenness’ not ‘a worm,’ in that though by death he turned to ‘rottenness,’ yet he did not come by a birth out of rottenness. But he that is the son of man is called ‘a worm,’ because he is henceforth propagated from the corruption of mortal bodies.

25. Therefore because the words of his friends are concluded, blessed Job sets on with a more penetrating acuteness of the suing, and his words are proportionably strong as they are the last; seeing that even in the same way it is the usage of lawyers, that the argument, by which they beforehand see that they are above their adversaries, they reserve for the conclusion of the suit. It follows;

C. xxvi. 1, 2. *But Job answered and said, Of whom art thou the helper? whether of one that is powerless? or dost thou sustain the arm of him that is not strong?*

xviii. 26. To help one that is weak is an act of charity, to wish to help one that is powerful, of pride; and so because his friends, whilst bearing the likeness of heretics, on the plea of helping God, endeavoured to make a display of their own wisdom, Bildad is justly found fault with, that it should be said, *Of whom art thou the helper? whether of one that is powerless? or dost thou sustain the arm of him that is not strong?* As if he said in plain words; ‘While thou settest thyself to help Him, under Whose greatness thou dost sink to the earth, all the encouragement which thou affordest comes of ostentation, not of piety.’

27. But herein it is requisite to be known, that even God, Who surely is not ‘powerless,’ we help whilst acting with humility. And hence it is said by Paul, *For we are helpers of God.* For when to him, whom He doth Himself by interior grace pervade, we by the voice of exhortation contribute, this which He through the Spirit brings to pass within, we outwardly by the office of the voice do assist, and then only is our exhortation brought to completion, when God was in the heart, to be aided. Hence He saith elsewhere; *So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.* For to ‘plant’ and ‘water’ is to ‘help,’ both which will be but a void ministration, if in the heart God ‘giveth not the increase.’ But they

1 Cor. 3, 9.

ib. 7.

who have high thoughts of their own power of mind, will not be helpers of God with humility; because whilst they reckon themselves to be of use to God, they are making themselves strangers to the fruit of usefulness. And hence it is said to the disciples by the voice of Truth, *When ye shall have done all those things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do.* It proceeds; Book XVII. Luke 17, 10.

Ver. 3. *To whom hast thou given counsel? perchance to him that hath not wisdom?*

28. To 'give counsel to one that is foolish' is an office of charity, to give it to one that is wise, of ostentation; but to give it to Wisdom Itself, of wrongmindedness; and because those who we have said bear the likeness of heretics, by their mode of speech, were administering to ostentation rather than to usefulness, it is yet further added rightly against Bildad, xix.

And shewn thine own prudence overmuch.

To one to whom there is right prudence it is not overmuch, because according to Paul's declaration, he seeketh *not to be wise above the degree that he ought to be wise.* But to whomsoever there is overmuch prudence, there is not right prudence. For whilst it is carried beyond due measure, it is made to turn off on one side or another of offence. Now they shew their prudence to be 'overmuch,' who aim to appear fuller of prudence in comparison of others; whence it very frequently happens that whilst they have not the art to be wise in moderation, they even speak things that are foolish. On account of which circumstance, the actual excess of prudence is yet further subjoined, that it should be said,

Ver. 4. *Whom wouldest thou have taught? Was it not Him Who made the breathway?*

29. By the 'breathway' we live, by prudence we are wise. But it is ours first to live, and afterwards to be imbued with wisdom; because in order that we have the power to be wise, it is first brought to pass that we should have being. He, then, Who bestowed life, the same doubtless gave prudence as well. But because Bildad thought blessed Job was scourged for sin, that secret judgment of God which he should have adored in humility, he set himself with over- xx.

Job 26, 5. Lit. weening temerity to penetrate to the bottom. And so that very One he preferred himself before in respect of prudence, Whose judgment without understanding it he judged. That very One he preferred himself before in prudence, from Whom he received the breathway of life, as though he were wise more than He, the very Being from Whom he had it given it him that he should be. But because blessed Job whilst bearing a type of Holy Church delivered a few things in the rebuking of proud men, who, he was not ignorant, bore a likeness of heretics, according as he said above;

Job 13, 3. 4. *I desire to reason with God; first shewing that ye are forgers of lies, and followers of wrong tenets;* he suddenly lifts himself up to instruction, and in opposition to the ignorance of the highminded, he opens wide the breadth of his knowledge in sentences, saying,

Ver. 5. *Lo, the giants groan under the waters.*

xxi. 30. For it was fitting that by rebuking he should first beat down the swelling of earthly wisdom, and by instruction afterwards pass on to words replete with mysteries. Thus by 'giants,' either apostate Angels, or all proud men may without objection be understood. For hence it is said by

Is. 26, 14. the Prophet, *The dead shall not live, the giants shall not rise up again.* For whom does he call 'the dead' saving sinners, and whom does he designate 'giants' save those, who over and above take pride in sin. Now the former do 'not live,' because by sinning they have forfeited the life of righteousness; these latter too 'cannot rise up again' after death, because, after their transgression being swoln with pride, they do not have recourse to the remedies of penitence. Hence

Prov 21, 16. it is written again, *The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.* For whosoever forsakes the way of righteousness, to whose number does he join himself, saving to the number of the proud spirits? Now it is well said in opposition to the high-minded, *Lo, the giants groan under the waters.* As if it were expressed in plain speech; 'Wherefore on the score of knowledge should man be proud, when the abyss of ignorance keeps at the bottom the very proudest of the spirits of the Angels?'

31. But if by the name of 'the giants' the powerful ones

of this world are denoted, in 'the waters' we may have the multitudes represented, as John beareth witness, who saith, *The waters, which thou seest, are peoples.* Now against him that is filled with pride it is well spoken; *Lo, the giants groan under the waters;* because all that are high and lifted up, while in this life they long to attain the highest pitch of honours, groan under the burthens of peoples. For in proportion as a man is the higher lifted up here, he is burthened with so much the heavier cares. And to those very same people in mind and thoughts he is put under, whom in dignity he is put over. And by these words it is well shewn in brief that all pride lies prostrate on the ground by the mere act by which it lifts itself up on high, so as to be the more effectually bowed down beneath all things from the same cause, that it would fain be set above all. For man when he is lifted up in high stations, bears so many in number over him, as he rules persons put beneath him. But those, that are associated with such persons, are by fellowship in their labour themselves also weighed to the ground. For together with them they likewise bear the toilsomeness of the burthen, whilst along with them they go after the gloriousness of the honour. Hence whereas he said, *Lo, the giants groan under the waters;* he directly added;

Book XVII.

Rev. 17, 15.

And they that dwell along with them.

32. As though he said; 'Equally with them do they groan,' who by taking delight are associated to their glory. Now the very employment of worldly dignities is borne down with readier vices in proportion as it is charged with heavier cares. For would that the mind of man even at rest might be able to see and eschew sins! And so because he saw that the longed for heights of affairs cannot be administered without sins, and because it is not hidden from the wrath of God, whatsoever is committed of an unlawful kind, he fitly subjoined in pursuance;

xxii.

Ver. 6. *Hell is naked before Him, and destruction hath no covering.*

33. Which same Paul likewise saith, *But all things are naked and opened unto His eyes.* But by the title of 'hell' and 'perdition' he denoted the devil and all the associates of

xxiii.

Heb. 4, 13.

Job 26, 7. Myst. his condemnation; but Who that One is before whom 'hell is naked,' he goes on with telling;

Ver. 7. *He stretcheth out the north over the empty place.*

xxiv. 34. By the title of the 'north,' in Holy Writ the devil is used to be designated, who with the thought to bind up the hearts of the nations with the iciness of insensibility, said, Is. 14, 13. *I will sit also upon the mount of the Covenant, in the sides of the north.* And he is 'stretched over the empty place,' because he has possession of those hearts, that are not filled with the grace of the love of God. Yet is it competent to Almighty God, that even those vessels of the devil, empty of every virtue, He may fill with the gift of His grace, and deposit the solid substance of Divine fear in those persons, whom He does not see stablished by any conduct of righteousness. Hence it is fitly added;

And hangeth the earth upon nothing.

xxv. 35. For what is denoted by the title of 'earth,' saving Holy Church; who, whilst she receives the words of preaching, renders back the fruit of good works? Whereof it is Deut. 32, 1. 2. said by Moses, *Let the earth hear the words out of my lips, let my speech be looked for like the rain.* And what but the several gentile peoples are denoted by 'nothing,' of whom it Is. 40, 17. is spoken by the Prophet, *All nations before Him are as nothing, and they are counted to Him less than nothing.* In that 'nothing,' then, is 'the earth hung suspended,' which before, being a void place, was occupied by the 'north;' because those hearts of the Gentiles became filled with the love of God, which had been aforetime weighed down by a deadness of the devil. But it may be that both by this 'empty place,' the infidelity of Judæa is denoted, and by 'the earth,' as we said, the propagation of Holy Church. Thus let the holy man look at the fall of Judæa in her perishing, and espy the privileges of the gentile world brought back to pardon, and let him say, *He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.* For because the hearts of the Gentiles, being void of faith, were made subject to the devil, 'He stretched the north over the empty place;' and because, there being no Ps. 56, 7. Vulg. merits forthcoming, (as it is said, *For nothing shalt Thou save them,*) upon the Gentiles the Lord founded His Church,

which same Gentiles are by the Prophet called 'nothing,' in pursuing the subject he rightly adds, *And hangeth the earth upon nothing.* Now in what order this thing was done, he continues in subjoining with wonderful method. For he saith, Book XVII.

Ver. 8. *He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds, that they should not burst forth alike beneath.*

36. For what does he call 'the waters' in this place but knowledge; what 'clouds' but the Preachers? For that in Holy Writ 'water' may sometimes be a term used for knowledge, we have been taught by Solomon bearing witness to it, who says, *The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the well-spring of wisdom as a flowing brook.* That, by water knowledge is denoted, the Prophet David bears witness, saying, *Dark water in clouds of the sky*, i. e. secret knowledge in the Prophets, who before the Advent of the Lord, whilst, pregnant with secret sacraments, they were bearing in them boundless mysteries, to the eyes of beholders had their meaning obscured. But by the name of 'clouds,' what else is denoted in this passage but the holy Preachers, i. e. the Apostles, who being dispatched in every direction through the regions of the world, both knew how to shower in words, and to flash forth[1] in miracles? Whom the Prophet Isaiah beholding long before, said, *Who are these that fly as clouds?* Thus because this man, filled with the spirit of prophecy, in this utterance of his voice longs that for the praise of God the rise of Holy Church may commence, he betakes himself to tell the order of her rise from the preaching of the Apostles, who took the greatest pains to preach to uninstructed people what was plain and comprehensible, not what was high and arduous. For holy knowledge, which is here set forth by the title of water, if in the same way that they drew it from the heart, so they poured it forth from the lips, by the immensity thereof they would overwhelm rather than water their hearers. Hence his knowledge being unbound within, that it should not burst forth alike beneath, in nourishing his hearers with the dropping of words, that 'cloud' spake, saying, *And I brethren could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat.* For who could have borne it if he that was caught up to the xxvi. Prov. 18, 4. Ps. 18, 11. [1] coruscare Is. 60, 8. 1 Cor. 3, 1. 2.

Jos 26, 8. Myst. third heaven, that was caught into paradise, even hearing unutterable words, which it was not permitted to man to speak, had opened such unbounded depths of celestial knowledge? or what hearer's power would he not overwhelm, if all that he might have been able to draw within, as far as tongue of flesh may suffice, overflowing without the mighty flood of this water had poured forth?

37. But that uninstructed hearers might be comforted not by an inundation of knowledge, but by the tempered dropping of preaching, *God tieth up the waters in the clouds, that they may not burst forth alike beneath.* Because He tempers the preaching of the teachers, that so the infirmity of the hearers, being nourished by the dew of the things spoken, may be made strong. Which is well described in the Gospel by a mystical mode of representation, where it is Luke 5, 3. said, *Jesus entered into the boat of Peter, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land; and he sat down thus, and taught the people.* By Peter's ship what else is denoted but the Church committed to Peter? and that the Lord may preach to the crowds flocking together out of this ship, He orders it to be 'thrust out a little from the land.' Which same he neither bids to be carried into the deep, and yet does bid that it be thrust out from the land, signifying, surely, that to uninstructed people His preachers ought not to preach either what is too deep relating to the heavenly world, nor yet what is earthly. And so 'water is bound up in the clouds,' because the knowledge of the Preachers, speaking to the minds of the frail, is forbidden to teach as much as it is able to see.

38. Since, for the most part, if the heart of the hearers is spoilt by the vastness of the utterance, the tongue of the persons teaching is mulcted in the damage of indiscretion. Ex. 21, 33. 34. Whence it is written; *And if a man shall open a cistern, or if a man shall dig a pit and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein, the owner of the pit shall make it good.* For what is it 'to open a cistern,' saving with strong understanding to penetrate the mysteries of Holy Writ? And what is understood by an 'ox' and an 'ass,' viz. a clean and an unclean animal, save every believer and unbeliever? Accordingly, let him that 'diggeth a cistern cover it, lest an ox

or an ass tumble headlong therein,' i. e. let him, who already makes out deep things in Holy Writ, by silence cover over his lofty perceptions before those that do not reach that compass, lest by a stumbling-block to the soul he kill either the believing little one, or the unbelieving, who might have been led to believe. For upon the death of the beasts of burthen there are damages due, plainly because he is convicted of having done that, whereby he is held a debtor for the exercising of penance[a]. Accordingly, 'the cistern must be covered,' in that before little minds, deep knowledge requires to be veiled, lest by the same cause that the heart of the teachers is lifted up to the highest things, the infirmity of the hearer fall away to the lowest. Accordingly let it be said with justice, *He bindeth up the waters in His clouds, that they should not burst forth alike beneath.* For 'the waters would burst forth alike,' if, in the presence of weak hearers, the knowledge came forth from the lips of the speaker as great as it is, if all the whole fulness of preaching poured itself out at once, and reserved nought to itself together with those making progress. For it is fitting that he that preaches should have an eye to the measure of him that hears him, so that the preaching itself may grow with his hearers' stages of growth. For so does it behove every single preacher to do, as it is dealt with himself from heaven; never to tell to the weak all that he has the perception of, because he himself too, so long as by flesh of mortality he is weak, does not perceive all those things that belong to heaven. And therefore he ought not to preach to the ignorant as much as he is acquainted with, because even he himself, touching heavenly mysteries, cannot have his eyes open to see how great they are. For hence it is that Paul the Apostle, after he was admitted to the mysteries of heaven, saith, *For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face.* And hence it here follows in continuation; 1 Cor. 13, 12.

Ver. 9. *He holdeth back the face of His Throne, and spreadeth His cloud upon it.*

[a] Some editions add, 'For whoso, when he cometh to deep streams of knowledge, covereth them not before the brutish hearts of his hearers, is held bound to a penalty, if through his words a clean soul or an unclean be taken in mischief.' This passage is hardly found in any Mss. and seems to have been introduced into the text from the margin. Ben.

Job 26, 9. — Lit. xxvii. 39. In the face there is wont to be shewn forth acquaintanceship. Thus 'the face of His Throne is held back,' in that by us in this life the gloriousness of His kingdom is not perceived, so great as it is had within; 'upon which the cloud' is rightly said 'to be stretched;' because that glory of the heavenly kingdom is not seen such as it is. *For the corruptible body presseth down the soul; and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things.* And so against seeing it we are besprinkled with a mist, for we are darkened by the mere cloudiness of our ignorance. Whence it is rightly said by the Psalmist, *And darkness was under His feet; and He rode above the Cherubim, and did fly; He did fly above the wings of the wind: He made darkness His secret place.* For there is 'darkness to Him under His feet,' in that by those beneath He is not seen in that brightness, wherewith He exercises dominion among those above. For He 'rode above the Cherubim, and did fly;' since the 'Cherubim' is a term used for the fulness of knowledge. By consequence he is said above the fulness of knowledge to have 'ridden, and to have flown,' because the loftiness of His Majesty there is no knowledge doth compass. 'He did fly,' because He transported Himself on high, far from the reach of our understanding. 'He did fly above the wings of the wind,' because He transcended the knowledge of souls. He made darkness too His secret place, because whereas we are dimmed with the mists of our infirmity, by virtue of our ignorance He is hidden from us, that He should not be seen by us now in eternal and interior Brightness. Hence in the Song of Songs also it is said to Him by the Spouse, *Escape, my Beloved, escape.* 'It escapes us,' we say, as often as that does not occur to our minds which we wish to remember. 'It escapes us,' we say, when that which we wish we do not retain in our recollection. So Holy Church, after that she sets forth the Death and Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord, cries out to Him, full of the Spirit of Prophecy, *Escape, my Beloved, escape.* As though she said; 'Thou That art made by the flesh comprehensible, do Thou by Thy Divine Nature transcend the comprehension of our perception, and in Thine own Self remain to us Incomprehensible.'

Wisd. 9, 15.

Ps. 18, 9—11.

Cant. 8, 14.

And so He 'holdeth back the face of His throne,' because He hideth the power of His Majesty from mortal beings. BOOK XVII.

40. But if we render His 'throne' the Angelical Powers, for on these same Powers He sitteth enthroned as on a royal seat, 'He keeps back the face of His Throne' from us, because so long as we have our subsistence in this mortal flesh, what and how wonderful those ministrations of the Angels are, we do not perceive. 'And He spreadeth His cloud upon it' assuredly because He both lifts up our heart for making search, and yet it is brought to pass by a secret mode of control, that by the very endlessness of its searching it is kept back. Whence it is written, *The deep uttered its voice at the loftiness of its imagining.* For the mind of man is forced to cry out in admiration, when, in loftiness of survey, it is straitened in its searchings by the very act by which it is enlarged. Or, surely, because we are ourselves the 'throne' of God, He is said not unjustly to 'keep back the face of His throne,' when our knowledge is prevented advancing to things of a higher range. Upon which same throne God is said 'to spread His cloud,' because remaining Himself invisible, He puts forth secret judgments upon us, that at once a thing should be done in prominency, that we should be able to see, and yet the origin of the deed be hidden in concealment, so that the reason wherefore it be done, we should needs not know. Hence too it is fitly added; Hab. 3, 10.

Ver. 11. *He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the light and darkness come to an end.*

41. Because very often in Holy Writ, as we said above, by the name of 'waters' peoples are denoted; *the Lord compasseth the waters with bounds;* because He so tempers the knowledge of mankind that until the successions of the changing seasons pass away, it cannot perfectly attain to the knowledge of the Interior Brightness. But if by the name of 'light' we understand the righteous, and by the designation of 'darkness' sinners; (and hence Paul saith, *For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light,*) there is nothing to hinder this same thing that we said being understood, 'that the perfect knowledge of eternity is vouchsafed to no one, until the course of the righteous and of the unrighteous is brought to an end.' But because it is not wonderful that carnal people know nothing of things above, the holy man lifts xxviii. Eph. 5, 8.

Job 26, 12. Myst. himself up in astonishment at that same Divine power, and considers that it surpasses the very knowledge of Angels and perfect men as well, saying,

The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his nod.

xxix. 42. What else does he call 'the pillars of heaven' but the holy Angels, or the principal preachers of the Church, over whom in the heavenly world the whole structure of the spiritual edifice increasing arose, as Holy Scripture elsewhere Rev. 3, 12. bears witness, saying, *Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God.* For whoever is established firmly by a right purpose of mind in the work of God, is set up as a pillar in the structure of the spiritual edifice; that being placed in this temple, which is the Church, he should be both for usefulness and ornament. But Job calls those 'pillars of heaven' whom the Apostle calls 'pillars' of the Gal. 2, 9. Church, saying, *Peter, and James, and John, which seemed to be pillars, gave me the right hand.*

43. We may also not inappropriately interpret the 'pillars of heaven' the Churches themselves, which being many in number, constitute one Catholic Church spread over the whole face of the earth. Hence too the Apostle John writes to the seven Churches, meaning to denote the one Catholic Church replenished with the Spirit of sevenfold grace, and Prov. 9, 1. we know that Solomon said of the Lord, *Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars.* And the same, to make known that it was of the seven Churches he had spoken that, in going on sedulously introduced the Prov. 9, 2-4. very Sacraments themselves too, saying, *She hath killed her sacrifices, she hath mingled her wine, she hath also set forth her table; she hath sent forth her maidens, that they may cry to the citadel and to the walls of the city. If any be a little one, let him come to me.* For the Lord 'killed the sacrifices' by offering Himself on our behalf. He 'mingled the wine,' blending together the cup of His precepts from the historical narration and the spiritual signification. Ps. 75, 8. Whence it is elsewhere written, *For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture.* And 'He set forth His table,' i. e. Holy Writ, which with the bread of the word refreshes us when we are wearied, and

come to Him away from the burthens of the world, and by its effect of refreshing strengthens us against our adversaries. Whence too it is elsewhere said by the Church; *Thou preparest a table before me, against them that trouble me.* He 'sent forth His maidens,' i. e. the souls of the Apostles, being in their actual beginning infirm[1], 'that they might cry to the citadel and the walls of the city;' in that whilst they tell of the interior life, they lift us up to the high walls of the City Above, which same walls, surely, except any be humble they do not ascend. Whence it is there added by that same Wisdom; *If any be a little one, let him come unto Me.* As if she said in plain terms; 'Whosoever accounts himself great in his own eyes, contracts the avenue of his approach unto Me; for there is a loftier reaching unto Me in proportion as the mind of each one is in himself the more truly abased.'

Book XVII.

Ps. 23, 5.

[1] i. e. thence called *maidens*, see on Job 1, 2. B. 1. §. 20. T. 1. p. 41.

44. But with whatever degree of goodness a man may be advanced, with whatever knowledge he may be made to grow, he cannot fathom to the bottom, what a governance of judgments the Lord rules us with. Therefore let him say, *The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his nod;* because in most things not those even are able to reach the lofty height of His will, who whilst announcing see the rewards of that will. Which, as we said above, there is nothing hinders being interpreted of the Holy Angels as well; because the very Powers of the heavenly world themselves, which behold Him without ceasing, in that very contemplation of theirs are made to tremble. But that that should not be a trembling of woe to them, it is one not of fear, but of admiration. Now because he had brought in how great the consternation of his wonderment was, he now relates the order of our salvation. It follows;

Ver. 12. *In His might the seas are suddenly gathered together, and His wisdom hath struck the proud one.*

45. What else is denoted by the title of the sea save the present world, wherein the hearts of men seeking after earthly things swell with the diverse billows of the thoughts? which same being stirred up by the exaltation of pride, whilst with cross sway they thwart one another, do as with confronting waters dash themselves together. But henceforth

xxx.

Job 26, 12. Proph. ‘the seas are gathered together in His might,’ because on the Lord being made Incarnate, the discordant hearts of worldly men believe in agreement. Henceforth Peter ‘walks on the sea,’ because to the preachers of Christ, these once swelling hearts are by lowly hearing bowed down to the earth, so that in the Gospel too it justly represented the gentleness of this world, that the stormy water of the sea, its swelling being forced down, was trodden by the feet of the Lord. Now in what manner that was done is disclosed, when it is said, *His wisdom hath struck the proud one.*

46. Who else is here called ‘proud,’ saying he who said, Is. 14, 14. *I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the Most High;* and concerning whom it is spoken by the Job 41, 24. 25. voice of God, *Who is made that he should fear none, and himself is king over all the sons of pride.* With reference to whom moreover the prophet David agrees with this Ps. 89, 10. sentence, saying, *Thou hast abased the proud man, like one wounded.* But though to the simple nature of Deity it is not one thing to be, and another thing to be wise, nor one thing to be wise, and another to be strong, forasmuch as the strength is identically the same that the wisdom, and the wisdom that the essence of the Deity is, yet I consider it a thing to be regarded with lively attention, that this man being filled with the prophetic spirit, chose to describe the proud devil as stricken by ‘the wisdom’ rather than the power of God. For he saith not, ‘His might,’ but, ‘His wisdom hath struck the proud one.’ For, as we have said, although by right of simple Nature, the Might of God is the Wisdom of God, yet as to the appearance, the Lord overcame the devil, not by power, but by reason; for the devil himself, by overthrowing us in that root of our first parent, as it were rightfully held man under his thraldom, who whilst he was created with free will, yielded consent to him, when he prompted what was unjust. For when created to life in the freedom of his own will, he was of his own accord made the debtor to death. Therefore such a transgression was to be done away; but saving by sacrifice it could not be done away. A sacrifice was to be sought after, but what sacrifice could be found for the setting men free? For neither was it just that for reasoning man there should be slain sacrifices of brute beasts.

Whence the Apostle says, *It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.* And so if brute creatures on behalf of a rational animal, i. e. in the stead of man, were not proportionate victims, a man was to be sought out, who should be offered for men, that for a reasoning being committing sin there might be offered a reasoning victim. But what of the fact, that a man without sin could not be found? And the victim offered in our stead, when could it cleanse us from sin, if the actual victim itself was not without sin's contagion? Since it being defiled could never have cleansed the defiled. Therefore that it might be a rational victim, Man was to be offered, but that it might cleanse man from his sins, Man and that Man without sin. But who might there be man without sin, if he was descended from a combination in sin? Thereupon in our behalf the Son of God came into the womb of the Virgin; there for our sakes He was made Man. Nature, not sin, was assumed by Him. He offered a sacrifice in our behalf, He set forth His own Body in behalf of sinners, a victim void of sin, that both by human nature He might be capable of dying, and by righteousness be capable of purifying. This One, then, when the ancient enemy saw after the Baptism, then directly fell upon Him with temptations, and by diverse avenues strove to insinuate himself into His interior; he was overcome and laid prostrate by the mere sinlessness of His unconquerable mind. Book XVII. Heb. 9, 23.

47. But because to the interior his strength did not reach, he betook himself to His outward man, that because he was subdued by the prowess of the soul, Him, Whom he had not the power to deceive by temptation, he might at all events by the death of the flesh seem to vanquish. And, as it has been said before us, he had leave granted to him against that, which the Mediator had taken from us mortals. But where he had power to do something, there he was vanquished utterly on every side; and from the same cause that he obtained the power outwardly to kill the flesh of the Lord, his interior power, whereby he held us fast, was killed. For he was himself vanquished within, whilst in seeming he vanquished without; and he, who of

Job 26, 13. Myst. right held us the debtors of death, of right lost in us the right of death; because by means of his ministers, he sought for the flesh of Him to be done to death, in Whom he found no whit of the debt of sin. Thus our Lord did in our behalf pay death not due, that death due might not injure us; and so it is well said, *And His wisdom hath struck the proud one;* because our old enemy by the excess of his presumption lost even him, whom by the law of wicked persuasion he got possession of; and whilst he audaciously went after Him, in Whom there was nought at his command, by right he lost him, whom he as it were justly held bound. Therefore he was 'stricken by wisdom,' and not by power, in that while he is let loose for the tempting God, he is unfastened from possessing man; so that him that was under him, he should lose by the same act, whereby he had ventured to come to an encounter with Him, Who is over him. But upon the Lord being killed in the flesh, what gloriousness of powers came upon his Preachers is related, when it is added,

Ver. 13. *His Spirit garnished the heavens.*

xxxi. 48. What 'heavens,' saving those concerning whom it is Ps.19,1. written, *The heavens are telling the glory of God?* Which 'heavens His Spirit garnished' then, when It 'filled' them. Acts 2, 2—4. Which we have learnt by Luke's relating, who saith, *Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting; and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.* From Him, then, they received the adornments of prowess, whom an exceeding disfigurement of fear before had possession of. For we know that first one of the Apostles, i. e. of the 'heavens,' how often, before the grace of the Holy Spirit was vouchsafed, whilst he feared to die, he denied 'the Life;' who not by punishments, not by inflictions, not by the dreadful power of any one, but by the simple interrogation of a single slave, was brought to the ground. And truly that that slave the sterner sex might not exhibit as an object to cause alarm, it was by a maidservant putting the question that he was tried. Again, that the weakness of such a sex, by the lowness of her

office as well might be made contemptible, he was questioned not by a maidservant only, but by a *maidservant keeper of the door*. See how contemptible the person is that is sought out for the purpose of trying him, that it might be plainly brought to light, what excessive weakness of fear possessed him, who even before the voice of a maidservant of the door could not stand fast. Book XVII. John 18, 17.

49. But this one a little before so full of affright, what after the Coming of the Holy Spirit he became, let us now see. Surely we have learnt by Luke's attesting it, with what an authoritativeness he preached the Lord, in opposition to the priests and rulers. For when upon a miracle being wrought inquiry had arisen, and the rulers from among the priests, the elders, and the scribes laid their hands together in the persecution of the Apostles, setting those persons in the midst, they busied themselves to ask in what power they had wrought the miracle. Unto whom Peter being filled with the Holy Spirit spake, *Ye rulers of the people and elders; if we be this day examined of the deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Whom ye crucified, Whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole.* And when the rage of the persecutors against this grew to a head, and the priests and rulers forbade those men to preach Jesus, with what independent power Peter rose in height against the wrath of the rulers, is made plain, when it is there added directly, *But Peter and the Apostles answered and said unto them, It is right to obey God rather than man.* But when the commands of those withstanding did not repress the influence of the persons preaching, it comes to scourges. For it is added, *And when the chief priests had beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the Name of Jesus, and let them go.* But that the prowess of the Apostles not even scourges had power to restrain, is openly shewn, when it is immediately introduced next, *And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name of Jesus.* And immediately even after the rejoicing of their scourges what they did we have pointed Acts 4, 8. &c. v. 19. Acts 5, 40.

Job 26, 13. Myst. out; *And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ.* Mark, that man, a little while before full of fears, now speaks with tongues, flashes forth with miracles, with free voice rebukes the unbelief of the priests and rulers, gives to the rest for the preaching of Jesus an example of independence. That he should not speak in His Name, he is restrained by scourgings, and yet is not withheld. He sets at nought the strokes of those that scourged him, who a little while back had dreaded the words of those that questioned him. And he that when asked a question shrunk in consternation from the powers of a maidservant, when beaten with the rod forces back the powers of the rulers. For being henceforth established by the efficacy of the Holy Spirit, the heights of this world he trod down with the heel of liberty, that he should see that that was low down on the earth, whatever it was that swelled high against the grace of the Creator.

50. These are the ornaments of the heavens, these are the gifts of the Spirit, that are used to be manifested by divers powers, which as divided by the bestowal of secret distribution Paul reckons up, saying, *For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.* All which directly afterwards including in one by a general statement he says, *But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.* Of these 'heavens' too it is said in the Psalm, *By the hand of the Lord were the heavens set fast.* Of these ornaments of the Spirit also it is added, *And all the power of them by the Spirit of His mouth.* Therefore it is well said, *His Spirit hath garnished the heavens;* because the holy Preachers, except they received the gifts of the Paraclete, that were promised to them, would not have shone with any comeliness of might. But because when the Holy Apostles were beautified with the grace of the gifts of virtue, the preaching of life gained ground against the hearts of unbelievers, and our old enemy being expelled

1 Cor. 12, 8—10.

Ps. 33, 6.

by the voices of the preachers, abandoned the minds of the unbelievers, which he had close beset; after the ornaments of the heavens it is fitly subjoined; Book XVII.

And by the midwifery of His hand the crooked serpent is brought forth.

51. For who is described by the designation of the 'serpent,' but our old enemy, at once slippery and crooked, who for the deceiving of man spake with the mouth of a serpent? Of whom it is said by the Prophet, *Leviathan the bar-serpent, the crooked one;* who was for this reason allowed to speak with the mouth of a serpent, that by that very vessel of his man might learn what he was that dwelt within. For a serpent is not only crooked but slippery as well; and so because he stood not in the uprightness of truth, he entered into a crooked animal, and because if to his first suggestion resistance be not made, in a moment whilst it is not perceived he slips in entire into the interior of the heart, he made speech to man by a slippery animal. Now 'the dens' of this serpent were the hearts of wicked men. Which same because he drew on to his own depravity, he as it were rested in the dwelling place of them. But 'by the midwifery of the Lord's hand, the crooked serpent is driven out of his own dens,' in that whilst the Divine grace heals us, he that had held possession of us, our old enemy, is cast out of us, as Truth Incarnate says, *Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.* Hence all the Saints now already he does not possess by holding, but persecutes by trying. For because he does not reign in them within, he fights against them without, and because he has lost his dominion in the interior, he sets on foot wars in the exterior. For him That One drove forth from the carnal hearts of men, Who for the sake of men came to the state of Incarnation; and whereas He took seisin of the hearts of unbelievers, He as it were put His hand to the dens of the serpent. Whence it is rightly said by the Prophet; *And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My Holy Mountain.* For whom does he call 'the sucking child,' or 'the weaned child,' saving the Lord? And what did he denote by 'the hole of the asp,' and 'the cockatrice

xxxii.

Is. 27, 1.

John 12, 31.

Is. 11, 8. 9.

Job 26, 13. Proph. den,' saving the hearts of wicked men? Because our old enemy, whereas he gat himself wholly into their consenting, as a crooked serpent in his own hole, he gathered and wound up the coils of his craftiness; whom he both designates with the title of 'asp' as covertly ravening, and of a 'cockatrice' as openly wounding. And so the Lord 'put His hand upon the hole of the asp and the cockatrice,' when He took seisin of the hearts of the wicked by Divine power. And the asp and the cockatrice, being seized, i. e. the devil, he drew away therefrom a captive, that 'in His Holy Mountain,' which is the Church, he might not 'harm' His Elect believers.

Thus it is hence said in the Song of Songs, on the coming Cant. 4, 8. of the Spouse; *Thou shalt be crowned from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens.* For what else is denoted by the title of the lions but the devils, which rage against us with the fury of the deadliest cruelty? And because the sinners are called to faith, whose hearts were once 'the dens of lions,' when by their confession the Lord is believed to have overcome death, it is as if He were 'crowned from the lions' dens.' For a crown is the recompense of victory. So often then do the faithful offer a crown to Him, as they confess that He has overcome death by virtue of the Resurrection. And so 'the lion is driven from his den,' because 'by the midwifery of the Lord's hand,' 'the crooked serpent is hindered from dwelling in the dens,' which he had possession of. For he went forth defeated from the hearts of believers, who had aforetime ruled over them with the sceptre of unbelief.

53. Observe how in a few short sentences the holy man related the order of the Lord's Advent, set forth its weighty charges, and in admiring described what by His Incarnation was possible to be done. But He, Who wrought marvellous things when He came in humility, cannot be viewed with all the great terribleness He shall come with, when He appeareth in the mightiness of His Majesty. The order of His first Advent might be viewed and estimated, in so far as in coming to redeem carnal beings, He abated the greatness of His Divinity to carnal eyes. But who might bear the terrors of His Highness, when with the power of the Second Advent

in exercising judgment by fire, He shall glow in the Majesty of His power? Whence the holy man describes His first Advent, but is exhausted for the second, saying,

Ver. 14. *Lo, these things have been spoken for part of His ways; and whilst we scarcely hear a little drop of His words, who shall be able to look on the thunder of His Majesty?*

54. What is meant in this place by the designation of the 'ways,' but the Lord's modes of acting? Hence too the Lord saith by the Prophet; *For My ways are not as your ways.* Accordingly in telling of the Advent of the Lord, he had described the ways of God in part; because His method of acting by which He created us was one thing, and that by which He redeemed us another. Thus those things, which he told touching the Lord's way of acting, making light of by comparison with the final Judgment, he says, *Lo, these things are spoken for part of His ways.* Which he also calls 'a little drop of His words,' for whatsoever thing that is high, whatsoever thing that is terrible, we whilst set in this life are brought to know by the contemplation of Him, from the vast ocean of the secrets of Heaven wells out to us like a slight drop of the liquid element Above. *And who shall be able to look on the thunder of His Majesty?* As though he expressed himself in plain words; 'If we scarce endure the wonders of His humility, the loud and dreadful Advent of His Majesty with what nerve do we encounter?' This thundering of His Advent the Psalmist also sounds out, saying, *Our God shall come in state, our God, and shall not keep silence, a fire shall devour before Him, and a mighty tempest round about Him.* Hence Zephaniah the Prophet tells it out, saying, *The Great Day of the Lord is near; it is near and hasteth greatly. The voice of the Day of the Lord is bitter: the mighty man shall be troubled there. That Day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of cloud and whirlwind, a day of the trumpet, and of a dreadful sound.* The terror then of the Strict Inquest, which Zephaniah calls 'the Trumpet,' blessed Job designates 'thundering.' Which Joel also viewing saith, *Let all the inhabitants of the land be troubled; for* xxxiii. Is.55,8. Ps.50,3. Zeph. 1, 14—16. Joel 2, 1—3.

Job 26, 14. Proph. *the Day of the Lord cometh; for it is nigh at hand, a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of cloud and whirlwind. For the Day of the Lord is great, and very terrible, and who shall sustain it?* But how incomprehensible and unimaginable that Greatness wherewith He shall come in His Second Manifesting, in some degree we estimate aright, if we consider with heedful reflection the weighty particulars of His first Advent. Surely that He might redeem us from death, the Lord came to die, and the impoverishment and punishments of our flesh He underwent in His own Body; Who before He came to the stock of the Cross, suffered Himself to be bound, to be spit on, to be mocked and to be beaten with blows on His cheek. Observe to what disgraceful treatment He for our sakes consented to come, and yet, before He permitted Himself to be laid hold of, He questioned His persecutors, saying, *Whom seek ye?* To Whom they thereupon gave answer, *Jesus of Nazareth.* And when He said to them directly, *I am He*, He only uttered a voice of the mildest answer, and at once prostrated His armed persecutors to the earth. What then shall He do when He cometh to judge the world, who by one utterance of His voice smote His enemies, even when He came to be judged? What is that Judgment which He exercises as immortal, Who in a single utterance could not be endured when He was about to die? Who may sustain His wrath, Whose very mildness even could not be sustained? So then let the holy man consider it and say, *And whilst we scarcely hear a little drop of His words, who shall be able to look on the thundering of His Majesty?*

BOOK XVIII.

Contains the exposition of the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth chapters of the Book of Job, to the twenty-first verse and half through it, after manifold senses.

IT is the case for the most part in Holy Writ that there are things of a mystical nature so represented, that nevertheless they seem put forth in accordance with the historical relation. But oftentimes such sort of descriptions are mixed together in that same historical relation, whereby the whole outside of history is rendered null[1]; which same whilst they sound of nothing belonging to the history, oblige the reader to look for something else in them. For things being spoken that we suppose plain, when we find any particulars interspersed with a more obscure meaning, we are as it were pricked by a kind of spurs, that we should both be alive for the understanding some things in a deeper sense, and that we should take even those things as put forth in a more obscure sense, which we looked upon as spoken in their plain import. Whereas, then, blessed Job was speaking of the Word of the Lord, and the greatness of His thundering, next in order to these words it is directly introduced;

[1] cassetur

Chap. xxvii. 1. *Moreover Job added taking up his parable, and said.*

2. By which same verse it is shewn in how great mystery the words of this most saintly man are delivered, when 'a parable,' i. e. a simile, is described as 'taken up' by him, who utters nothing below in the way of simile or comparison. For be it far from us in this place to interpret a 'parable' that musical instrument[a]. Since neither is it allowable to suppose that under infliction of chastenings he used music, when Truth saith by His Scripture, *Music in mourning is* Eccles. 22, 6.

i.

[a] 'We know of no musical instrument so called either now or formerly; but one may imagine some so named from their parabolic figure.' Ben.

Job 27, 2. Allegor. *as a tale out of season.* The word 'parable,' then, having been named, see how we now learn, the text itself telling it, not by the text only to estimate his words. And so every thing must be drawn to turn to that likeness, by which the Church is denoted in a figure. And indeed in the very beginning of his speaking, the things said are put forth in a plain sense, but they are entwined with more obscure ones subjoined. For he begins as he is used, with a plain mode of speech, but he finishes his words with a description pregnant through mystical significations. And so he saith,

Ver. 2. *As God liveth, Who hath taken away my judgment, and the Almighty, Who hath brought my soul to bitterness.*

ii. 3. By which same words blessed Job at once tells his own circumstances, and represents the times of Holy Church under affliction, wherein she is borne down by the open frowardness of unbelievers, and vexed by the bitterness of persecution. For in two ways the Church is subject to be tried by her adversaries, viz. that she should suffer persecution either by words or swords. Now Holy Church aims with the greatest diligence to possess wisdom and patience. And her wisdom is exercised when she is tried with words, her patience is exercised when she is tried with swords. Now, however, he is speaking of that persecution, wherein she is provoked not by swords, but by false statements. Now we know numbers, who when they encounter some things adverse in this life, do not believe that God is, but there are some that hold that God is, but does not concern Himself in the least with the affairs of men. For of the one Ps 14,1. it is said by David, *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.* But the latter say in him, *How doth God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?* And again; Ps.94,7. *Yet they say again; The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.* Thus this person who bore a type of Holy Church, whilst set fast in the very bitterness of his affliction, made answer against them both. For as life has 'being,' but death has not, to avow that God is, he saith, *As God liveth,* but that he might tell that God concerns Himself with the affairs of mortals, he added, *Who hath taken away my judgment, and hath brought my soul to*

bitterness. For these ills which he suffers he bears record that he suffers not by accident, but by God Who ordereth all things, nor does he attribute the power for his bitterness to his tempter, but to his Creator. Book XVIII.

4. For he knows that the devil, though he is ever aiming at the afflicting of the just, yet if he do not receive the power from our Maker is not empowered in the least degree for any tittle of temptation. And hence all the devil's will is unjust, and yet whilst God permits it, all his power is just. For of himself he does unjustly seek to try men indifferently, but those that require to be tempted, in so far as they require to be tried, God does not permit to be tried otherwise than justly. Whence also in the Books of the Kings it is written of the devil, *That the evil spirit of the Lord came upon Saul.* Where the question justly occurs, 'If it was the Spirit of the Lord, why should it be called an evil spirit? and if an evil spirit, why the Lord's?' But in two words there is comprehended at once the just power and the unjust will in the devil. For both he himself is called an evil spirit in respect of a most evil will, and the same spirit is called the Lord's spirit in respect of the most just power bestowed on him. And so it is well said; *God liveth, Who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, Who hath brought my soul to bitterness.* For though the enemy rage furiously, who longs to deal the blow, yet it is the Creator, Who permits him to have power for any thing. But forasmuch as the holy man by invoking the life of God bound himself to somewhat, let us hear what in so obliging himself he subjoins. It follows; 1 Sam. 18, 10.

Ver. 3, 4. *All the while my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in my nostrils, my lips shall not speak iniquity, nor my tongue meditate falsehood.*

5. What he first calls 'iniquity,' this repeating afterwards he calls 'falsehood.' For both all 'falsehood' is 'iniquity,' and all 'iniquity' 'falsehood,' because, whatever thing is at variance with truth is surely at odds with equity. But between this which he expresses, 'to speak' and that which he adds afterwards, to 'meditate,' there is a wide difference. For sometimes it is a worse thing to 'meditate' falsehood than to speak it. For to speak is very frequently a matter of pre- iii.

Job 27, 3. Lit. cipitation, but to 'meditate' of purposed wickedness. And who could be ignorant by what great difference the sin is distinguished, whether a man tell a lie by precipitation or of set purpose? But the holy man, to be entirely attached to the truth, tells that he would neither lie of set purpose, nor by precipitation. For all lying is very seriously to be guarded against, though sometimes there is a certain sort of lying which is of lighter complexion, if a man lie in rendering good [b]. But seeing that it is written, *The mouth that belieth slayeth the soul.* And, *Thou shalt destroy all them that speak leasing.* This kind of lying also those that are perfect eschew with the greatest care, so that not even the life of any man should by deceit of theirs be defended, lest they hurt their own souls, whilst they busy themselves to give life to another's flesh; though the same particular kind of sin we believe to be very easily remitted. For if any sin is by godly practice ensuing after to be done away, how much more is this easily wiped off, which pitifulness, the mother of good works, herself accompanies?

Wisd. 1, 11. Ps. 5, 7.

6. But there are some that from the deceit of the midwives endeavour to establish that this species of lying is not sin, chiefly because, upon those midwives lying, it is written, *That the Lord made them houses.* By which mode of recompensing it is rather learnt what the offence of lying earns; for the profits of their kindness which might have been repaid them in everlasting life, on account of the sin of lying mixing in are diverted into an earthly recompense, that in their own life, which they were ready to defend by lying, they should receive back the good which they did, and not have any reward of their recompensing, that they might look forward to beyond. For if the thing be weighed with exactness, it was from the love of the present life they lied, not from the being bent on the recompense; for by the act of sparing, they endeavoured to protect the life of the infants; but by the act of lying, their own life.

Exod. 1, 21.

7. And though in the Old Testament a few such cases may possibly be discovered, yet almost on no occasion will

[b] Edd. 'Vitam præstando,' but most Mss. only 'præstando.' Ben. quotes St. Isidore, Synon. ii. 53. de Mend. as using the word thus, and notes that this passage is quoted in Grat. Decr. Caus. 22. q. 2. c. 16. see also St. Isidore Sent. ii. c. 30. §. 10. St. Aug. on Ps. v. 7. takes the same view.

the attentive reader there find this or a like kind of lying practised by those that were perfect, although the lie might seem to bear some sort of semblance of truth; and perchance it might be an offence of a lighter complexion under the Old Testament, wherein by victims of bulls and goats, the sacrifice was not the very Truth itself, but a shadow of the truth. For in the New Testament, after Truth has been manifested by flesh, we are advanced by a higher scale of precepts, and it is meet and right that certain actions which in that People were instrumental to a shadow of the Truth, we should give over. But if there be any man, who would defend his lying by the Old Testament, because there perhaps it was less detrimental to particular persons, he must needs be compelled to say that the robbing of another's property, and the retaliation of an injury, which were there allowed to those in a weak state, cannot be injurious to himself. All of which it is plain to all men with what severe strictures Truth doth visit. Which 'Truth' now henceforth, the shadow of the betokenment of Him set aside, is brought to light in very flesh. But as the holy man gives his word neither to 'speak' nor 'meditate falsehood,' these actual particulars, wherein he agrees with the truth, he subjoins, carrying it on; Book XVIII.

Ver. 5. *God forbid that I should justify you; till I die, I will not depart from mine innocency.*

8. For he would 'depart from his innocency,' if he reckoned good things of bad persons; as Solomon bears witness, who saith, *He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord.* For there are persons, who, whilst they extol with commendation deeds of men ill done, heighten that which they ought to have rebuked. For hence it is said by the Prophet, *Woe to those that sew pillows under every elbow of the hand, and make cushions under the head of every age.* For a 'pillow' is put for this, that we may rest the easier. Therefore whoever flatters persons doing wrongly is putting a pillow under the head or the elbow of one lying, so that the man that should have been chidden on account of sin, being stayed up therein by commendations, should rest at his ease. Hence again it is written, *And one built up a wall, and, lo,* iv. Prov. 17, 15. Ez. 13, 18. ib. 10.

Job 27, 6. Hist. *others daubed it.* For by the term of 'a wall,' the hardness of sin is denoted. And so 'to build up a wall' is for a man to rear against himself barriers of sin; but they 'daub the wall,' who flatter those that commit sins, that what the first by doing wickedly build, those same persons by spreading their flatteries should as it were make of bright colour. But the holy man, as he does not think what is bad of the good, so he refuses to judge what is good of the bad; saying, *God forbid that I should judge you just: till I die, I will not depart from mine innocency.* Where he subjoins in plain words;

Ver. 6. *My righteousness, which I began to hold fast, I will not abandon.*

For 'his righteousness' that he had 'begun with,' he would 'abandon,' if he went out of the way into the praising of persons committing sin. But because we then more truly keep away from the sins of others when we first keep ourselves safe from our own, why he is so afraid to be guilty touching those, he gives the grounds of the principle, when he adds;

For neither doth mine heart reproach me in all my life.

v. 9. As if he expressed himself in plain words; 'On your account I ought not to be drawn into guilt, in that I have dreaded to commit sin in my own affairs.' But it is a thing to be known, that every one that is at variance with the precepts of the Lord in practice, as often as he hears them, is reproached and confounded by his own heart, because that which he has never done is brought to recollection. For whereinsoever it sees itself to have done amiss, the conscience by itself secretly accuses self. Whence the Ps. 119, 6. prophet David beseeches, saying, *Then may I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all Thy commandments.* For greatly 'ashamed' is every man, when either by reading or hearing them he turns his eye to the precepts of God, which by his way of living he has disregarded. Thus it is 1 John 3, 21. 22. hence declared by the voice of John, *If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask we receive of Him.* As if he said in plain speech, 'If that He bids, we do, that we ask, we shall obtain.'

10. For with God both these two do of necessity match with one another exactly, that practice should be sustained

by prayer, and prayer by practice. Thus it is hence that Jeremiah saith; *Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. Let us lift up our hearts with our hands unto God in the heavens.* For to 'search our ways' is to sift what is inmost in the thoughts. But he 'lifts up his heart with his hands,' who strengthens his prayer by good works. For he that prays, but shuts his eyes to practice, 'lifts up the heart,' but does not 'lift up the hands.' But whosoever practises, but does not pray, 'lifts up the hands,' but does not 'lift up the heart.' And so according to the voice of John, the heart then acquires confidence in prayer, when no wickedness of life withstands it. Of which same confidence it is rightly said now by the holy man; *For neither doth mine heart reproach me in all my life.* As though he said in plain speech, 'It never remembers to have been guilty of that, whereby it might be made ashamed in its prayers.' But it may be asked, on what principle he declares that he is not reproached by his heart, seeing that he accuses himself above of having sinned, saying, *I have sinned: what shall I do unto Thee, O Thou Preserver of men?* Or surely, *If I would justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me.* Book XVIII. Lam. 3, 40. 41. Job 7, 20. 9, 20.

11. But it is requisite to be known that there are sins that by righteous men are possible to be avoided, and there are some sins which even by righteous men are not possible to be avoided. For what man's heart, whilst bound up with this corruptible flesh, does not slip in ill bent thought, even if he be not plunged into the very pit of consenting? And yet to think these same wrong thoughts is to commit sin. But while there is a resisting of the thought, the soul is freed from being confounded. And so the mind of the righteous, though it be free from bad practice, yet sometimes it falls to the ground in bad thinking. Thus then into sin too it slips, because in the thought of the heart at all events it is made to swerve, and yet it hath not that whereon to upbraid itself afterwards in weeping, because it recovers itself before that it falls by consenting. And so with just propriety he who confessed himself a sinner, declares that he is never upbraided by his heart, because though perhaps by thinking unlawful thoughts he ever fell short of righteousness, yet by the

Job 27, 7. 8. Allegu. resolute struggle of the soul, he resisted the thought. It follows;

Ver. 7. *Let mine enemy be like the ungodly, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous.*

vi. 12. In Holy Writ, the words 'like as' and 'as if' are sometimes put not for a likeness, but for the reality. Whence John 1, 14. we have that; *And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father.* And thus here also 'like,' and 'as' seem to be said rather for the sake of affirmation than similitude. Now between the ungodly and the wicked man there is wont to be this difference sometimes, that every ungodly man is unrighteous, but not every unrighteous man ungodly. For the 'ungodly' is put instead of unbeliever, i. e. a stranger to the godliness of religion. But a man is called unrighteous, who by wrongness of practice is at variance with righteousness, even if he does perhaps bear the name of the Christian Faith. Therefore by the typical voice of blessed Job, Holy Church, which is subject to some gainsaying the right Faith, avouches that she has an 'ungodly man her enemy.' But because she has to bear others under the cloke of the faith within her pale living in bad practices, she abhors the 'unrighteous' man as being her adversary. But if 'like' and 'as' it is right we should understand as put on account of 'likeness,' Holy Church brands by a likeness to the ungodly those whom she is subject to living in a carnal manner within her pale. For within her bounds he is an enemy to her, who whilst he maintains himself a believer by professions, denies it by practices. And because he accounts him as an unbeliever, who, whilst set within her pale in semblance, only assails her with mischief of evil doing, he rightly says, *Mine enemy is like the ungodly, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous.* As though he said in plain speech; 'He is at variance with me in faith as well, who does not agree with me in practice.' It follows;

Ver. 8. *For what is the hope of the hypocrite, if he seize with covetousness, and God free not his soul?*

vii. 13. The hypocrite, who in the Latin language is termed pretender[1], aims not to be but to appear just, and therefore he is a covetous robber, because whereas while doing wickedly he desires to be revered for sanctity, he seizes on the

[1] simulator

praise of a life not his own. But it is said to be the aim of hypocrites, that both what they are they may keep back, and what they are not they may make themselves known to men as being; so that they should surpass their own measure in esteem, and by credit for conduct shew themselves to excel the rest of the world. They eschew the seeming to be that which they are, and before the eyes of men they clothe themselves with a kind of overlaid respectability of innocency. Hence in the Gospel they are rightly upbraided by the voice of our Redeemer, when the words are spoken to them, *Woe unto you, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear to men beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of covetousness and iniquity.* Contrariwise all that are Saints really not only do not ever at all covet glory that is beyond their measure, but do also eschew appearing that very thing, which they have obtained to be. And hence that great Preacher of truth, in speaking against the false apostles; while he was relating the extraordinary excellences of his practice for the instruction of his disciples; whilst he was describing that he had undergone such countless perils in accumulated persecution, and after this made mention of his having been carried up to the third heaven, and into Paradise again, where he had power to learn things so great, as he had not power in any degree to tell; was on the point perhaps of telling things still more marvellous of himself, yet holding himself in from human applause by deep reflecting he adds, *But now I spare, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.* He then had somewhat yet further to be declared concerning himself, who 'forbears' to speak. But the great Preacher did both, that both by telling the things which he had done he might instruct his disciples, and by being silent keep himself safe within the bounds of humility. For he would have been over ungracious, if he had withheld all relating to himself from the disciples; and perhaps incautious over much, if even to the disciples he had uttered all about himself. But in a wonderful way, as has been said, he did both the one and the other, so that by

Book XVIII.

Mat. 23, 27. 28.

2 Cor. 12, 6.

Job 27, 7. 8. Lit. speaking he might instruct the life of those that heard him, and by holding his peace preserve his own.

14. Now it deserves to be known, that holy men as often as they communicate any thing concerning themselves to their followers, are imitating the custom of their Creator. For God, Who forbids us that we never be commended by our own lips, in Holy Writ does utter His own praises; not that He Himself needs them, Who cannot be a gainer by praises; but whilst He relates to us His greatness, He lifts up our ignorance to Himself, and by telling His own good He teaches us; whereas man would never know Him, if He had been minded to be silent about Himself. And so He for this reason shews His own praises, that we may be able by hearing to know, by knowing to love, by loving to follow, by following to obtain, and by obtaining to enjoy the vision Ps. 111, 6. of Him. Whence the Psalmist saith, *He will tell the people the power of His works, and that He may give them the heritage of the heathen.* As if he expressed himself in plain terms; 'For this reason He tells the mightiness of His doing, that he that heareth thereof may be enriched with His gifts.' Therefore holy men, imitating the way of their Creator, sometimes reveal things that concern themselves, that those who hear them they may instruct, not that they may themselves be gainers, and yet in these things they keep guard over themselves by bethinking themselves deeply, lest whilst they lift up others from an earthward bent, they should themselves be sunk in the coveting of earthly applause. Whose statements hypocrites for the most part follow, but the meaning of their statements they are wholly blind to, because what the righteous do with a view to the advantaging of their neighbour, this these same do with a view to the extending of their own name. But the holy man beholding that hypocrites seek not at all after future glory, but desire to possess themselves of present glory, says, *What is the hope of the hypocrite?* in that while he loves the present things, Rom. 8, 24. he hopes not for the future. For it is written, *For what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?* And so for this reason there is on the part of the hypocrite no advancing in any degree to the eternal rewards by hope, because that which required to be sought elsewhere, he makes it his pride to

have in possession here. And because his offence was set forth, the punishment too is subjoined, when it is forthwith brought in next; Book XVIII.

Will God hear his cry, when trouble cometh upon him?

15. 'His cry in the time of his straits God heareth not,' viii. because in the time of tranquillity he did not himself hear the Lord crying in His precepts. For it is written; *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.* Prov. 28, 9. And so the holy man seeing that all they that are indifferent to practise what is right now, in the time at the end betake themselves to words of beseeching, saith; *Will God hear his cry?* By which words assuredly he follows close upon the words of our Redeemer, Who saith, *Last of all come the foolish virgins also, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. And it is answered them, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.* Matt. 25, 11. Because great severity is exercised then, in proportion as now greater mercy is prolonged[1], and He does then with strictness put forth judgment upon persons not corrected, Who now patiently bestows pity upon them going on transgressing. For hence it is the Prophet saith, *Seek ye the Lord, while He may be found; call ye upon Him, while He is near.* Is. 55, 6. Now He is not seen, and 'is near,' then He shall be seen, and shall not 'be near.' He hath not yet appeared in judgment, and if He be sought, He is found. For in a wonderful way, when He appeareth in judgment He is at once able to be seen, and unable to be found. Hence Solomon describes Wisdom at once caressing sweetly, and judging dreadfully, saying, *Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets.* Prov. 1, 20—28. Whose language he also tells, adding, *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and fools delight in their own harm, and silly ones hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof. Behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you: I will make known my words unto you.* Mark with what kind of words her sweetness in calling is expressed. Let us see now in what ways her severity in upbraiding is told, that in the end sooner or later her strictness in punishing may have free scope. *Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand; and*

[1] al. granted beforehand

Job 27, 10. Lit. *no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof.* Let her now say how she will smite those, whom she bears with so much longsuffering, never turning back to her: *I also will laugh at your destruction, I will mock when your fear cometh, when sudden calamity falleth on you, and your destruction riseth as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer. They shall rise up early, but they shall not find me.* By the mouth of Solomon then, the wisest of men, all particulars are carefully set forth relating to the Judgment from Above: because she both at first calls us sweetly, and afterwards upbraids us terribly, and at the last condemns us irretrievably. And so it is well said; *Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?* Surely because the hypocrite then findeth not a remedy in crying, who now lets slip the fitting opportunity of crying. Concerning whose wickedness it is yet further added;

Ver. 10. *Or will he be able to delight himself in the Almighty?*

ix. 16. For he that is overcome by the love of earthly things, in no degree delights himself in God. The soul indeed can never exist without its delight, for it delights itself either in things below or in things above, and in proportion as it is employed with higher devotion towards those above, it grows deadened with the greater loathing towards those below, and as it glows with a keener interest for those below, it cools in proportion with an accursed insensibility from those above. For both cannot possibly be loved together and alike. Hence the Apostle John, well knowing that amongst the thorns of worldly attachments the crop of heavenly charity can never shoot, before he produces the seeds of the love eternal, with the holy hand of the word eradicates from the hearts of his hearers the thorns of worldly affections, in the words, *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.* And he directly subjoins, *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* As if he said in express terms; 'Both these loves cannot contain themselves in one and the same heart, nor

1 John 2, 15.

does the crop of charity from Above shoot in that heart, wherein the thorns of gratification down below kill it.' And he reckons up all the prickles arising from that gratification below, saying, *For all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof.* And so the 'hypocrite cannot delight himself in God,' because heavenly desires never spring forth in his mind, seeing surely that the thorns of earthly love overlay it. Of whom it is fitly added; Book XVIII. v. 16. 17.

Will he always call upon God?

17. For it is then that the hypocrite 'calls upon God,' when the wretchedness of earthly circumstances wrings him hard. For when in this world he has obtained the carrying out of the good fortune sought for, his Maker, Who vouchsafed him this same good fortune, he asks not for. But because, as we said before, the art of those that teach should be, that in their hearers' minds they should first aim to destroy what is wrong, and afterwards to preach what is right; (lest the hearts that are full of evil things should not contain the good seed of holy preaching, whence it is said to Jeremiah, *See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down and to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant.* For it is first bidden him that he should pull down, and afterwards that he should build, first to pluck up, and afterwards to plant; because the foundation of rightful truth is not laid, except the edifice of error be first pulled down;) blessed Job after that he had made the case of the Universal Church his answer to the statements of his friends as if in opposition to words of heretics, and that by a manifold rejoinder he had destroyed their pride, describes himself henceforth to teach; that is, that he might be plainly seen in those things which he added to plant what is right, but in those that he premised to have plucked up what is wrong. It goes on; x. Jer. 1, 10.

I will teach you by the hand of God, that which is with the Almighty; I will not conceal.

18. In such a way does blessed Job speak in his own words as to denote something connected with what relates to xi.

Job 27, 12. 13. John 1, 3. us. For Holy Church in teaching, in so far as it is expedient to know it, hides not a particle of truth. Thus because 'the Hand of God' is a name for the Son; for, *by Him were all things made;* she tells that by the Hand of God she teaches those, whom she sees continuing foolish in their own wisdom. As if she said in plain words; 'I know not any thing of myself; but whatever I perceive of the Truth, this I comprehend by the bountifulness of that same Truth. Ye for this reason are not embued with right wisdom, because this same wisdom that you have you ascribe not to the Hand of God, but to your own selves.' For the adversaries of Holy Church, if they do at times perceive any thing true, this they attribute to their own powers, and they deprive themselves so much the more of the Wisdom from Above, in the same proportion as they wish to have it appropriated to themselves as being derived from their own wits. Unto whom it is sometimes vouchsafed for their judgment, that they should indeed know some things aright, but by this very same knowledge be rendered the more obnoxious to punishment. Whence it is fitly added;

Ver. 12. *Behold, all ye yourselves know: why then do ye utter vain things without cause?*

xii. Luke 12, 47. 48. 19. It is written; *And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did not worthily, shall be beaten with few* Jam. 4, 17. *stripes.* And again it is written; *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.* And so for the heightening of greater guilt Holy Church tells it that her enemies at once know what they ought to follow, and will not follow what they may know. Of which same Ps. 55, 15. persons it is elsewhere said; *Let them go down quick into hell.* Those are 'quick' that are sensible of the things that are done towards them. For the dead neither know nor are sensible at all, and so 'the dead' who do not feel are used to be put for persons that know not, but 'the quick,' who are sensible, for those that know. Therefore to 'go down quick into hell' is for persons to sin knowing and being sensible of it. It goes on; *This is the portion of an ungodly man with*

God, and the heritage of oppressors, which they shall receive of the Almighty. Which same 'portion' and 'inheritance' he thereupon gives, when he adds; Book XVIII.

Ver. 14. *If his children be multiplied, it is in the sword; and his grandchildren shall not be satisfied with bread.*

20. The title of the 'ungodly' is not without meaning given to heretics, who through the erroneousness of false doctrine are far removed from the knowledge of the truth; whom in the words following he calls 'violent' as well, as being persons who set themselves to wrest by violence to a wrong meaning the sentences of Holy Scripture containing right articles of doctrine. And so they are 'violent' if not in the goods of men, at all events in the senses of precepts. But the 'sons of violent men' are the followers of heretics, who while they consent to their error, are as it were engendered by their preaching. But while being 'multiplied' they shall 'be in the sword,' for though now they grow up in an immense multitude in a ruinous liberty, yet they are smitten by the sentence of the Judge to come. Whence the Lord saith by Moses, *My sword shall devour flesh.* For 'the sword of God devours flesh,' because in the Final Judgment His sentence destroys those, who are carnally wise. On which point it is to be made out why it should be said that the wicked 'receive this portion' and inheritance of theirs from the Almighty? Yet to those taking a right view it is plain that though they had it from themselves to act unjustly, yet it comes before the Equity Above, what is unjustly done justly to judge; so that the sentence of God should orderly appoint for punishment those whom their ill-ordered conduct drew into sin. Concerning whom it is fitly subjoined; *And his grandchildren shall not be satisfied with bread.* xiii. Deut. 32, 42.

21. For 'the grandchildren' of Heretics are they that are born by the preaching of children in error. And these 'bread fails to satisfy;' because while in the provender of the sacred Word they seek to perceive more than they take in, they are ever a hungering to the knowledge of the truth; and the preachings of instruction, which they are busy to seek for questioning, they are incapable of having for refreshment. But because from the number of these heretics some Holy

Job 27, 16. 17. ALLEG. Church gathers in, some she leaves obstinate in their wickedness, it is thereupon added;

Ver. 15. *Those that remain of him shall be buried in death.*

xiv. 22. Doubtless 'the persons left' of that tribe of heretics 'are buried in death,' for whereas they return not to the light of truth, assuredly they are sunk down in everlasting punishment by an earthly perception. And because it is sometimes the case, that whilst the leader of the common herds in error is carried off to punishment, the common herds that were led astray are new set to a knowledge of the truth, and then the persons under them return to true knowledge, when these persons are brought to eternal punishments, who had been wrongly set over them, it is fitly added;

And his widows shall not weep.

xv. 23. Whom do we take for 'his widows' but the subject common herds left deserted for their happiness by his death? For oftentimes, as has been said, when the preacher of error is carried off to everlasting punishments, his subject multitudes are brought back to the grace of a true acquaintance. For these multitudes the wicked preacher was set over like a husband, because the seducer of the soul did cleave joined to them for the worse. Or, indeed, 'the widows do not weep,' because whilst continuing in their erring belief, whereas they hold their preacher to have been holy, they are beguiled by a deceitful hope, that they should not mourn. It follows;

Ver. 16, 17. *Though he heap up silver as the earth, and prepare raiment as the mud; he may prepare, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver.*

xvi. 24. Silver is used to be interpreted the clearness of sacred Ps. 12,6. Writ, as it is elsewhere said; *The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth.* And because there are those that long to have the Word of God not inwardly in the exemplifying but externally in the displaying, therefore it is said by the Prophet, *All they that are clothed in silver are cut off*, being those, who by the word of God do not fill themselves with the interior refreshment, but array themselves in the outward exhibition. Hence their 'silver,' i. e. the word of heretics, is compared to 'earth,' because,

touching the subject of Holy Writ, that there may be something that they know, they toil and strain from the coveting of earthly applause. And these, too, 'prepare raiment as the mud,' because they make up testimonies of Holy Scripture loosely and bedaubingly, whereby they would defend themselves. He shall 'prepare' indeed, 'but the just shall put them on,' because the person who is full of right faith, which is used to be accounted to the Saints for righteousness, gathers together those self-same testimonies of Holy Writ, which the heretic adduces, and therefrom he charges home the obstinacy of that one's error. For whereas they fetch against us the testimonies of the Sacred Law, they bring with them unto us that whereby they may be defeated. And hence David representing a type of the Lord, but Goliath the pride of Heretics, they spake that in deeds, which we are disclosing in words. Thus Goliath came to battle with a sword, but David with a shepherd's scrip, but David, defeating that same Goliath, with his own sword slew him. Which thing we likewise do, who by His deigning have obtained to be made members of the promised David[e]. For when heretics full of pride, and advancing sentences of Holy Writ, we defeat by the same words and sentences, which they bring forward, we as it were behead Goliath in his pride with his own sword. And so 'the just puts on those same garments,' which the unjust man 'prepares,' because the holy man employs in the service of truth those same sentences by which the bad man strives to exhibit himself a master of learning in opposition to the truth. Book XVIII.

25. *And the innocent shall divide the silver.* For 'the innocent to divide the silver' is to set forth the revelations of the Lord piece by piece and with discrimination, and to apply to each individual what may be proportionately suitable. For the Word of the Lord which is here entitled 'silver' or 'garments,' this same is elsewhere denominated 'spoils.' Which the Psalmist likewise witnesses in the way of comparison, saying, *I rejoice at Thy Word as one that findeth great spoils.* Which spoils are so called for this reason, because on the Gentile world passing over to the faith of the Lord, the Jews are spoiled of the Sacred Oracles with which Ps. 119, 162.

[e] al. 'the promised members of David.'

Job 27. 18. they had been invested. And of this division of the silver or of spoils it is elsewhere said, *Benjamin is a ravening wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall diride the spoils.* By which words, no doubt, the Apostle Paul is designated, as being descended from the stock of Benjamin, who 'in the morning devoured the prey,' because in his first beginnings seizing upon all the believers he was able, he glutted his own cruelty. But 'in the evening he divided the spoils,' because afterwards being made a believer, he portioned out the sacred oracles by interpreting them.

ALLEG. Gen. 49, 27.

26. Though this 'silver,' which 'the innocent divides,' may be understood in another sense as well. For Heretics, that they may be easily able to recommend what is wrong, mix with their statements things that are right, that the minds of those that hear them by right views they may attract, and by wrong ones wound. Which same persons, because, in the precepts of God, they are pied with a sound and unsound mode of speech, are, in the Gospel, well represented by the appearance of the 'ten lepers,' with whose healthy colour whereas an evil whiteness is intermixed, by this excessive whiteness they are rendered foul. Hence we are warned, *Not to think of ourselves more than we ought to think, but to think soberly.* And these too, because they do not as yet love either God, of Whom they entertain wrong notions, nor yet their neighbour, from whom they are separated, are opposed to the precepts of the Decalogue, and therefore for the beseeching of the Lord they come ten in number. Now for this cause, that they mixed what is sound with what is unsound, they are pied with a difference of colour; but because they offended in His precepts, they call Him that whereby they had so offended, saying, *Jesus, Preceptor;* and hereby they directly obtained to be healed. And so because the Catholic makes out the things that are thought rightly, or that are thought wrongly by them, 'the innocent divideth the silver,' i. e. distinguisheth what may have been by them delivered either with wholesome or baneful effect. It goes on;

Luke 17, 12.

Rom. 12, 3.

Ver. 18. *He buildeth his house as a moth.*

xvii. 27. 'The moth builds a house' for itself by corrupting. Nor could the heretic have been shewn by a better comparison, who makes a dwelling for his misbelief no where

else save in the minds which he has corrupted, who also engages for his followers to be free from everlasting fire. For he pledges to them the refreshment of eternal rest, but his words have no solidity, because they lack the fulness of truth. Whence it is added, *And as the keeper he maketh a booth.* For ' the booth of the keeper' is not set firm by any foundation, but the time passing it is directly destroyed. And the rest promised by heretics is destroyed together with the time, in that after this life it is not found at all. And because oftentimes Heretics in contempt of the Church Universal are supported by the patronage of the powerful ones of the world, and the rich do not cease to aid them with all the countenance of active agency that they are empowered with, that identical person also, whoever he be, that is made to swell against the face of his Maker by temporal good things, is now touched by the sentence of the holy man, and from the particular ruin of heretics, the discourse is drawn off to a general characterizing of all the self-exalted, when it is added;

Book XVIII.

Ver. 19. *When the rich man sleepeth, he shall take nothing away with him, he shall open his eyes and shall find nought.*

28. In harmony with which same sentence the Psalmist saith, *All the foolish in heart are troubled, they have slept their sleep, and all the men of riches have found nothing in their hands.* For in order that the rich after death may ' find something in their hand,' it is told to them before death, in whose hands they should place their riches. *Make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations.*

xviii. Ps.75,5. Luke 16, 9.

When the rich man sleepeth, he shall take nothing away with him. His goods when he dieth he would take away with him, if whilst he lived, at the voice of him that besought him, he had taken them home to himself; for all things earthly, which we part with by keeping, we keep by bestowing; our patrimony which retained is lost, whilst paid out of hand it remains. For we cannot long continue together with our goods. Since either we by dying abandon them, or they by perishing as it were abandon us while living. And so it remains for us to manage that things

Job 27, 20. Lit. a drop of water, who refused crumbs of bread; and so 'want taketh hold of him like water.' That want is then not unsuitably likened to water, because there is that tormenting in hell, which, as swallowing up those it receives in the depths below, is used to be denoted by the title of a 'lake.' Whence it is delivered by the Prophet in the voice of mankind, Lam. 3, 53. *My life is fallen into the lake.* But by the triumphing of those that are escaped it is sung, Ps. 30, 2. 3. *O Lord my God, I cried unto Thee and Thou hast healed me. O Lord, Thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: Thou hast kept me from them that go down into the lake.*

31. *A tempest shall overwhelm him in the night.* What in this place does he call 'the night,' but the hidden time of sudden departing? And by the name of 'tempest' he represents the whirlwind of the Judgment. Which the Ps 50, 3. Psalmist also testifies, in the words, *Our God shall come in state, our God, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before Him, and round about Him a mighty tempest.* Of which same Prov. 1, 26. 27. 'tempest' Wisdom also saith by Solomon; *I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind.* And because the very ignorance of the coming departure is itself called 'Night,' 'in the night a tempest shall overwhelm him,' i. e. the whirlwind of Divine Judgment, whilst he is ignorant, shall seize upon Him. For it is hence that Truth saith by Itself, Mat. 24, 43. 44. *But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready. For in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh.* Hence also it is spoken against the 'evil servant;' v. 48-50. *But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken. The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of.* Hence Paul says to the disciples, 1 Thess. 5, 4. 5. *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of the light and the children of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.*

Hence to the rich man, ‘ giving a loose to pride, it is said by the voice of God, *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?* In the night he is described as giving up his soul, who whilst not seeing death beforehand is carried off in darkness of the heart. Thus then he saith, *A tempest shall overwhelm him in the night.* For because he is not minded to do the good things that he sees, he is caught by the tempest of his destruction which he seeth not. Of whom it is yet further added; Book XVIII. Luke 12, 20.

Ver. 21. *The scorching wind shall carry him off, and take him away.*

32. Who is in this place called the ‘ scorching wind’ but the evil spirit, who stirs up the flames of divers lusts in the heart, that he may drag it to an eternity of punishments? And so ‘ the scorching wind’ is said to ‘ carry off’ any bad men, because the plotter, the evil spirit, who inflames a man whilst living to evil, drags him when dying to torments. For that ‘ the scorching wind’ is wont to be meant for the unclean spirit, who by the breath of evil suggesting kindles the hearts of the wicked to earthly desires, the prophet Jeremiah testifies, saying, *A pot kindled I see, and the face thereof by the face of the North.* For ‘ the pot kindled’ is the heart of man boiling with the heatings of worldly concerns, and with the restlessness of desires. Which is kindled by ‘ the face of the North,’ i. e. set on fire by the suggestions of the devil. For that very being is used to be called by the title of ‘ the North,’ who said, *I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the North. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds.* Thus by the burning effect of this scorching wind the mind of each one of the Elect is cooled down, when the heat of evil inclinations is extinguished therein, and the flame of carnal desires turned to ice. And hence Holy Church in the praises of her spouse cries out with exultation, *I sat down under the shadow of him, whom I had desired.* Of the abatement of this heat it is said to her by Isaiah, by promise of the Lord, *Instead of the ground willow shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the nettle shall come up the myrtle tree.* For ‘ instead of the ground willow there comes up in her the fir-tree,’ when in the heart XX. Jer. 1, 13. Is. 14, 13. Cant. 2, 3. Is. 55, 13.

Job 27, 22. Lit. of the Saints, instead of the sunkenness of earthly thought, the elevation of heavenly contemplation rises up. Now the nettle is altogether of a fiery nature. But the myrtle is said to be of cooling virtue, and therefore 'instead of the nettle there comes up the myrtle tree,' when the minds of the righteous are brought from the irritation and heat of bad habits to coolness and quietness of the thoughts, while they now no longer seek earthly things, while they extinguish the flames of the flesh by heavenly aspirations.

33. In reference too to this cooling of the soul, which is Luke 1, 35. given from heaven, it is said to Mary, *The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee;* though on this point, by the term of 'the overshadowing,' either Nature of God to be made Incarnate might have been denoted. For a shadow is formed by light and body. Now the Lord is Light in respect of the Divine Nature, Who, by means of a soul intervening, vouchsafed in her womb in respect of human nature to become a body. And so because the Incorporeal Light was in her womb to be made corporeal, to her, who conceived the incorporeal for corporality, it is said, *The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee;* i. e. The Incorporeal Light of the Divine Nature shall in thee take the corporeal substance of Human Nature. But now let us carry to an end what we began relating to any wicked man. Accordingly 'the scorching wind takes him away,' in this way, viz. that him whom the evil spirit now kindles with the fire of evil concupiscence, he afterwards carries off to the flames of hell. It goes on;

And as a whirlwind shall carry him out of his place.

xxi. 34. 'The place' of the wicked is the gratification of the life of time, and the enjoyment of the flesh. Therefore every single individual is in a manner 'carried out of his place by a whirlwind,' when overwhelmed with affright on the Last Day he is severed from all his gratifications. Of which same Last Day it is directly added with justice,

Ver. 22. *For He shall let loose upon him, and not spare.*

xxii. 35. God, as often as He chastens the sinner by smiting him, for this reason 'lets loose' the scourge, that He may 'spare.' But when by smiting He brings his life to an end whilst remaining in sin, He 'lets loose' the scourge, but never at all 'spares.' For the Same, Who 'let loose' the

scourge that He might 'spare,' one day 'lets it loose' with this view that He may not spare. For in this life the Lord busies Himself so much the more that He may spare, in proportion as He scourges the more in awaiting; as He Himself saith to John by the voice of the Angel, *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten;* and as it is elsewhere spoken, *For whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth.* But reversely it is written of the scourge of condemnation, *The wicked is taken in the work of his own hands.* Of whom the Lord saith by Jeremiah, when He sees the multitudes transgressing irreclaimably, whom He now no longer regards as sons under discipline, but as enemies under unmitigated scourging, *For I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with a cruel chastisement.* And what is said here, *and not spare,* is there likewise brought out in other words; *Why criest thou for thine affliction? thy sorrow is incurable.* Whence the Elect always make this provision, that they should return to righteousness before the wrath of the Judge is inextinguishably kindled, lest being caught by the last stroke, they find life ended to them, together with sin. For the rod will then do away with the sin, when it alters the life, since whosesoever ways it does not change, his doings it does not atone for. Therefore all smiting from God is either a purifying of the present life in us, or a commencement of the punishment that follows. For with reference to those who profit by the scourge it is written, *Who framest pain in the commandment.* For in that case when the wicked man is scourged and amended, to the commandment he would not give ear; to the pain he does. And so there is 'pain framed in the commandment' to him, who by pain as it were in the stead of the commandment is kept back from evil practices. But touching these persons to whom scourges are a curse, not a clearance, it is said, *Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction.* With these, their scourges commence in this life, and last on in everlasting smiting. Whence the Lord saith by Moses, *For a fire is kindled in Mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell.* For so far as regards the present smiting it is rightly said, *A fire is kindled in Mine anger.* But as regards the eternal damnation,

Book XVIII.

Rev. 3, 19.

Heb. 12, 6. Ps. 9, 16.

Jer. 30, 14.

ver. 15.

Ps. 94, 20.

Jer. 5, 3.

Deut. 32, 22.

Job 27, 23. Lit. it is immediately added with propriety, *And shall burn unto the lowest hell.* Though by some persons that is used to be alleged, which is written, *God judgeth not twice upon the same thing.* Which persons, however, do not pay regard to this that is spoken by the Prophet of the wicked; *And crush them with double confusion.* And that, which is written elsewhere; *Jesus in saving the People out of Egypt, a second time destroyed them that believed not.* To which persons, however, if we yield assent, that any sin cannot be twice visited with punishment, this must be judged of those persons smitten for sin and dying in their sin, that their smiting begun here is completed there, that so to the unreformed there should be one and the same scourge, which begins here in time, but is consummated in eternal punishments, that to those that wholly refuse to be amended, the dealing of present scourges now should be the beginning of the torments to ensue. And so *God shall let loose upon him, and not spare.* It goes on;

Nah. 1, 9. LXX

Jer. 17, 18.

Jude 5.

Fleeing he shall flee out of His hand.

xxiii. 36. For he 'flees out of the hand' of the Smiter, who amends the wickedness of his behaviour; or otherwise, because in Holy Writ the hand is used to be taken for acting, he 'flees from the hand of the smiter,' who, whilst he marks the destruction of the wicked man, forsakes the path of wickedness. Whence it is yet further added;

Ver. 23. *He shall bind up his hands over him.*

xxiv. 37. For to 'bind up the hands' is to establish the practices of his life in uprightness. Whence Paul too saith, *Wherefore lift up the loosed hands, and the unstrung knees.* While, then, they behold the destruction of another, they are made to turn back to the conscience, to remind themselves of their own, and by the very same cause whereby one man is carried to torments, another is freed from torments. And so 'he binds up his hands over him,' because he observes in the punishment of another what to be afraid of; and whilst he sees one living in transgression so smitten, he binds fast his own too loose practices with the sinews of righteousness. And so it is brought to pass that he who, being a bad man, whilst living, had drawn numbers into transgression by the delightfulness of sin, in dying recovers some from trans-

Heb. 12, 12.

gression by the terribleness of torments. Which same the Psalmist bears witness to be of advantage to the good as well, saying, *The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his hands in the blood of sinners.* For ‘ in the blood of sinners,’ when dying, ‘ the righteous do wash their hands,’ because, when their punishment is seen, the life of the person seeing it is cleansed. It goes on; BOOK XVIII. Ps. 58, 10.

And he shall hiss upon him, beholding his place.

38. What is expressed in the hissing, but the straining of wonderment? But if in the hissing there is some other meaning sought, when the sinner dies, these that witness his death draw tight the mouth in hissing, in that they are converted to those spiritual words, which they had contemned, so that they henceforth begin to believe and to teach, what before, while they perceived the wicked man thriving, they used not to believe. For it very often happens that the mind of the weak is the more unsteadied from the hearing of the truth, as it sees the despisers of the truth flourishing; but when just vengeance takes away the unjust, it keeps others away from wickedness. Whence it is said by Solomon; *When the pestilent man is punished, the little one will be wiser.* Thus the holy man after he had adequately filled up the punishments of the men of power that are lifted up in the world, again directs his words to the pride of heretics, who are lifted up in speech, saying; XXV. Prov. 21, 11.

CHAP. XXVIII. ver. 1. *The silver hath the beginnings of its veins, and to the gold there is a place, where they fine it.*

39. In silver the power of speaking, in gold brightness of life or of wisdom is used to be denoted. And because heretics are so filled with pride for the brilliancy of their speaking, that they are not based firmly by any authority of the sacred books, (which books are for speaking like a kind of veins of silver to us, because from those identical books we derive the spring and source of our speaking,) he recalls them to the pages of sacred authority, that if they have a desire to speak in a true way, they may from that source draw forth what to say. And he saith, *The silver hath the beginning of its veins, and to the gold there is a place, where they fine it.*

As if he said in plain words; ‘ He that is fitting himself

Job 28, 1. Myst. for the words of true preaching, the originals of the cases he must of necessity derive from the sacred page, so as to bring round every thing that he speaks to a foundation of divine authority, and in that set firm the edifice of his own speaking. For, as we before said, oftentimes heretics, whilst they are eager to prop up what is bad of their own, broach things which assuredly are not maintained in the page of the sacred books. And hence the great Preacher admonishes his disciple, saying, *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane novelties of speaking,* for whereas heretics long to be extolled as if for excellency of wit, they as it were bring out new things which are not maintained in the old books of the ancient Fathers, and thus it follows, that whilst they desire to appear wise, they scatter seeds of foolishness to their wretched hearers.

1 Tim. 6, 20.

40. And it is well added; *And to the gold there is a place, where they fine it.* As if he said in plain terms; 'The true wisdom of believers, which has the Church Universal for its place, undergoes tribulation by you persecuting her, but from all the dross of sins by the fire of your persecution she is purified.' Whence it is written; *For gold is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity.* In which passage this too may be appropriately taken for the meaning, that for their foolish suffering heretics might seem to be rebuked. For oftentimes for the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer, they suffer much, and by those same sufferings they look for themselves to become His martyrs. To which persons it is now said by the voice of the holy man; *and to the gold there is a place, where they fine it.* For according to that which has been already said even before us, he that suffers out of the unity of the Church, punishments he may suffer, but a Martyr he cannot be made; for 'to the gold there is a place, where they fine it.' What then, ye heretics, say ye to these things? Ye are minded to be 'fined' by the afflicting of the flesh, nay even by martyrdom, but the place where ye must be fined, ye know not. Hear ye what is spoken by the voice of the holy preacher. 'To the gold there is a place, where they fine it.' So then, seek ye this 'place for the fining,' this furnace, wherein the gold may be fitly purged, find ye out.

Eccles. 2, 5.

41. There is one Church, in which he that may have attained to be fined, may likewise be purified from all the dross of sins. If for the sake of God ye undergo aught of bitterness, if aught of tribulation, being without her pale, ye can only be burnt, ye cannot be purified. Let Jeremiah tell, let him tell in what way the fire of your fining is void of all efficacy. *The finer melteth in vain; for their wickednesses are not done away.* See how the fire externally melting at once administers a punishment of hard suffering, and yet does not clear off the sin of misbelief; it both furnishes torments of cruel punishments, and does not cause additions of good merits. Moreover the fire of this fining which is undergone out of the Catholic Church, how utterly it is void of all efficacy the Apostle Paul instructs us, when he says, *And though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.* For some think wrong things touching God, and others hold what is right about the Creator, but do not maintain unity with their brethren; the one are sundered by erroneousness of faith, and the others by the commission of schism. And hence in the very first part of the Decalogue the sins of both sides are checked, seeing that it is said by the voice of God, *And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.* And it is immediately added, *And thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* For whoso imagines what is wrong about God, surely it is evident that he does not 'love God.' But he who while he entertains right notions about God is divided from the unity of the Holy Church, it is plain that he does not love his neighbour, whom he refuses to have for his fellow.

Book XVIII.

Jer. 6, 29.

1 Cor. 13, 3.

Mark 12, 30. 31. Deut. 6, 5.

42. Whosoever, then, is divided from this unity of the Church our Mother, either through heresy in entertaining wrong notions concerning God, or by the erroneousness of schism in not loving his neighbour, is bereft of the grace of that charity, concerning which Paul saith what we have before given; *And though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.* As if he expressed himself in plain utterance; 'Without the bounds of its place, the fire of fining being applied to me only afflicts me with torment, and does not purify me by its cleansing.'

Job 28, 1. Myst. This place all they that are lovers of holy peace seek with heartiest endeavours, this on seeking they find, this finding they keep, knowing the remission of sin, as to where, or when, or to what sort it is vouchsafed. For where is it, save in the bosom of our Catholic Mother? When, but before the day of coming departure? Because, *Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.* And, *Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near.* To what sort of persons, but to the converted, who after the imitating of little children are fashioned by humility as their mistress? To whom it is said; *Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.* And, *Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* And therefore, because there are no true martyrs made saving in the Catholic Church, it is rightly said, *To the gold there is a place where they fine it.* Because the soul would not be made bright in the radiance of everlasting beauty, except, so to say, it were first burnt here in the workshop of charity.

2 Cor. 6, 2. Is. 55, 6. Matt. 19, 14. Matt. 18, 3.

43. Moreover, we are to consider that there are some whom Almighty God by His secret counsel preserving in innocency from their very beginnings promotes to the topmost heights of virtuous attainments, that, as their age increases, both numerousness of years and loftiness of merits should simultaneously advance in them. But others abandoning in their outset He suffers to go with bad habits fermenting by headlong ways. Yet for the most part even these He has regard to, and for the following after Him He kindles them with the fire of holy love, and the itchings of bad propensities engrained in their hearts He converts into a fervour of virtue, and they are the more set on fire to the desire of beseeching the pitifulness of God, in proportion as they are the more ashamed at the recollection of their own wickedness; as it often happens, that in the conflict of the fight the soldier, who is placed before the eyes of his leader, basely yields to the enemy's valour, and that whilst he powerlessly turns his back he is struck; yet nevertheless being ashamed of this very thing that he has done [1] disgracefully before his leader's eyes, from the mere sense of shame he gathers greater force;

[1] 2 Mss. 'yielded.'

and afterwards executes deeds of prowess, to so high a degree that he may at once achieve present credit of his valour, and cover past disgrace of weakness. In a like way, these persons are sometimes more actively established in the service of God by consequence of past weakness, and such persons for the keeping of His commandments both the desire of things future draws on, and the remembrance of things past urges forward, that on the one side affection to that which is to come should stimulate, and on the other shame for that which is past spur on. Which same however, while the enemies of the Church see to be endowed with the highest virtues, and in their present life cannot any way find out that whereby they may derogate from their merit, they set themselves to impeach them of the past, as the Manichæan assails our Moses, in whom he endeavours to soil with the sin of a past homicide the grace of subsequent virtuous attainments; in whom he heeds not how patient he was afterwards to endure, but how precipitate he was before to strike. Such adversaries as these blessed Job encountering with the exactest eye of observation, after that he said, *Silver hath the beginning of its veins; and to gold there is a place where they fine it;* he justly added; BOOK XVIII.

Iron is taken out of the earth.

44. Heretics are used to pride themselves against us by the self-priding of their righteousness, and to boast high their practices with the swelling of ostentation, and ourselves, as we have said, they impeach either for being or having been bad persons. Accordingly in a most humble confession, and in a truthful defence against those, the holy man speaks, saying, *Iron is taken out of the earth.* As if he said in plain speech; 'men of strength, who by the sharpest swords of their tongues are become iron in this pitched battle of the defending of the faith, were one time but 'earth' in the lowest sphere of actions.' For to man on his sinning it was spoken; *Earth thou art, and unto earth shalt thou return.* But 'iron is taken out of the earth,' when the hardy champion of the Church is separated from an earthly course of conduct, which he before maintained. Accordingly he ought not to be contemned in any thing whatever, that he was, who has already begun to be that XXVII.

Job 28, 3. Myst. which he was not. Was not Matthew found in the earth, who, involved in earthly matters, served the business of the receipt of custom? But having been taken out of the earth, he was strengthened into the forcibleness of iron, in that by his tongue, as by the sharpest sword, the Lord in the enforcing of the Gospel pierced the hearts of unbelievers. And he that before was weak and contemptible by his earthly occupations, was afterwards made strong for heavenly preachings. Hence it is yet further subjoined;

And the stone being melted with heat is turned into brass.

45. Then is 'the stone dissolved with heat,' when the heart that is hard and cold to the fire of divine love is touched by that same fire of divine love, and melted in the glowing warmth of the Spirit, that to the life that follows it should burn with the heat of its longings, which life on hearing of before, it remained uninfluenced. By the power of which same heat, he is at once softened down to love and invigorated to practice, that as before he was hard in the love of the world, so he should afterwards give himself out strong unto the love of God, and what he declined to give ear to before, he should henceforth begin both to believe and to preach. And so, *the stone being dissolved with heat is turned into brass*, because the hardened mind, being melted by the fire of love from Above, is changed to true strength. So that the sinner that was before unmoved should afterwards be made at once strong in respect of authority, and sounding in respect of preaching. Which is well spoken by Isaiah; *They that trust in the Lord shall change their strength.* We 'change our strength,' when being converted, we eschew the present scene of things with as much power and might as we before were seeking it. But because the foregoing life is unfairly by adversaries counted to the character of Catholics, it is rightly added;

Is. 40, 31.

Ver. 3. *He hath set a time to darkness, and Himself vieweth the end of all and every one.*

xxix. 46. He hath Himself 'set a time to the darkness,' i. e. bounds to the wicked, where they should cease to be wicked. Whence it is said to them by the Apostle; *Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.* Like as to the other disciples as well the same great teacher saith,

Eph. 5, 8.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day. Hence also in the Song of Songs on the coming of the Church it is said, *Who is she that cometh forth as the morning in rising?* Book XVIII. Rom. 13, 12. 13. Cant. 6, 10.

For fitly is the Church described by being compared with 'the morning,' in that, by the knowledge of the faith she is changed from the darkness of sins to be in the bright light of righteousness. By the term of 'all and every one,' he would have both the Elect and the damned to be comprehended. For God both in doing and ordering what is good, yet not doing what is bad, but what by the wicked is done Himself so regulating that the things should not come forth irregularly, 'vieweth the end of all and every one,' and bears all things patiently, and beholds the goal of the Elect, how that from evil they are changed to good. He sees, too, the end of the damned, how that for bad practice they are dragged to a punishment worthy of them. He saw the end of Saul when persecuting, wherein prostrated on the earth he should say, *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?* He saw the end of the seeming-obedient disciple, that for the guilty deed he had committed he should tie his throat with a noose, and both punish himself when guilty of sin, and by thus punishing, betray himself the worse. He saw the Ninevites transgressing, but beheld the end of the transgressing in the repentance of the reformed. He saw likewise Sodom transgressing, but He beheld the end of the burning of lust in the fire of hell. He saw the end of the Gentile world, how that whilst occupied by the darkness of iniquities, it should be one day brightened with the light of faith. He also saw the end of Judæa, how that from that light of faith, which it held, it should blind itself with the darkness of hardened unbelief. Whence it is yet further added with just applicability, Acts 9, 6.

Ver. 4. *The stone likewise of darkness, and the shadow of death, the torrent divides from the people on travel.*

47. What was that people of the Jews, hard by unbelief, that refused to behold by faith that Author of life, whom it foretold by prophecy, but 'a stone of darkness?' because it proved at once hard by cruelty, and clouded by unbelief. Which same is also called by another term 'the shadow of

Job 28, 4 Myst. death.' For a shadow is drawn such and of the same sort as the outlines were of that object, from which it is derived. And who is designated by the name of 'death' but the devil? Of whom in a kind of mode of representation by his ministers[a] Rev. 6, 8. it is said, *And his name was Death.* Of whom that people was a shadow, because in following his wickedness, it presented in itself a semblance of him. But what is named by the title of the 'torrent,' save that fire that issues forth from the sight of the Awful Judge in the final Inquest, and divides the Elect and the damned? Whence too it is said by the Dan. 7, 10. Prophet, *A fiery and rapid stream came forth from before Him.*

48. But what People is 'on travel' in this world, but that which hastening to the inheritance of the Elect knows well that it has its native country in the heavenly world, and expects that it will there find its own the more, in proportion as here it reckons all things that pass away to be unconnected with itself? Thus the 'pilgrim People' is the number of all the Elect, who accounting this life a species of exile to themselves, pant with the whole bent of the heart after their native country Heb. 11, 13. 14. Above; of which persons Paul saith, *And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country.* This pilgrim state that same Apostle also was undergoing 2 Cor. 5, 6. 7. when he said, *Knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we go pilgrims*[1] *away from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight.* The woes of this pilgrim state he was Phil. 1, 23. in haste to get quit of when he said, *Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ;* and again, *To me to live is* ib. 21. *Christ, and to die is gain.* The burthen of this pilgrimage Ps. 120, 5. 6. the Psalmist felt lying heavy upon him, when he said; *Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar! My soul hath been much a sojourner.* From this he was panting to be extricated as speedily as possible, when in- Ps. 42, 2. flamed with heavenly aspirations he said, *My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God!* But this desire they are strangers to, who rivet

[1] *peregrinamur.*

[a] 1 Ms. ap. Ben. 'by a certain signification of his office,' but see b. xi. §. 28, and other places where he takes this as not said of Satan himself.

their heart on earthly gratifications. For whilst they love only the things that are visible, surely the invisible things, even if they believe them to exist, they do not love, in that whilst they follow themselves too much with the outward following, even in the interior they become carnal. Thus both people run together in this life, but do not together attain to the life everlasting, because, *the stone of darkness and the shadow of death the torrent divides from the people on travel.* As if he said in plain speech, 'Those whom in this present time either infidelity makes blind, or cruelty makes hard, the fiery stream that issues from before the Judge Eternal doth then sever from the People of the Elect, that thus from the company of good men the fire of the strict Inquest should part those, whom now the darkness of evil habits makes blind in their lusts. Book XVIII.

49. Perhaps by the designation of the 'torrent,' the actual watering of holy preaching may be understood, according to that, that is said by Solomon; *The eye that sneereth at his father and despiseth the travail of his mother, lo the ravens from the torrents shall pick it out.* For bad men, while they find fault with the judgments of God, do 'sneer at their father,' and heretics of all sorts whilst in mocking they contemn the preaching of Holy Church, and her fruitfulness, what else is this but that they 'despise the travail of their mother?' whom we not unjustly call the mother of them as well, because from the same they come forth, who speak against the same, as John bears witness, who says, *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.* But 'the ravens from the torrents come,' when the true Preachers come forth for the defence of Holy Church from the streams of the Sacred Books. Which same also are rightly termed 'ravens,' because they never pride themselves on the light of their righteousness, but by the grace of humility confess in themselves the blackness of sins. Whence, too, it is spoken by the Church of Elect souls, *I am black, but comely.* And John says, *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.* Which same ravens, no doubt, 'pick out the eyes' of him that 'sneereth,' because they overcome the aim of bad and froward men. Thus by this testimony, if here as well 'the torrent' is to be taken for

Prov. 30, 17.

1 John 2, 19.

Cant 1, 5. 1 John 1, 8.

Job 28, 4. Myst. preaching; *the stone of darkness, and shadow of death, the torrent divides from the people on travel;* because the preaching of the Saints gives over the hardened minds of the lost, and betakes itself to the pious hearts of the lowly. Hence it is yet further subjoined,

Those whom the foot of the needy man forgot, and the inaccessible ones.

50. What other in this place is taken to be the needy man, saving Him concerning Whom it is said by Paul, 2 Cor. 8, 9. *Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor.* The 'feet' of which 'needy man' were the holy Preachers, by the presence of which same compassing the Gentile world, He went round about the whole globe. Of whom it Lev. 26, 12. is said by the Prophet, *And I will walk in them.* Was not he His foot, who whilst held fast in fetters, said, *For which I* 2 Cor. 6, 16. *am an ambassador in bonds?* But those, who proved themEph. 6, 20. selves 'a shadow of death and a stone of darkness,' 'the foot of the needy Man forgot,' because in the very outset of the new born Church, whereas the holy Apostles were minded to have preached the kingdom of heaven to Judæa, seeing that they profited for nothing at all, they went off for the preaching to the Gentiles, as they themselves say in Acts 13, 23. their Acts; *It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.* Concerning whom also it is said by Ps. 46, 2. the Psalmist, *The mountains shall be carried into the heart of the sea;* because the Apostles, being thrust off by Judæa, were 'carried' into this scene of the Gentile world. Who then are those, that by unbounded hardness and from dimsightedness of heart, like a kind of 'stone of darkness and the shadow of death,' are divided from the People of the Saints going on travel, saving those whom 'the foot of the needy Man forgot,' i. e. whom the Preachers of the Lord, poor as He was, that is, in respect of human nature, abandoned on account of the swelling of their pride; and those they wholly forgot, whilst they transferred the seeds of their preaching to the getting fruit of the Gentiles only? Whom moreover he rightly calls 'inaccessible' also, because while they were hardened in their infidelity, they refused to give the words of

life access to their heart. But this Judæa which grows thus hardened, whether what she was for long, or what she underwent afterwards, let us listen to. It goes on; Book XVIII.

Ver. 5. *The earth, from which bread arose, is overturned in its place by fire.*

51. Judæa was wont to give bread, in that she used to set before men the words of the Law. Which same Law because the children of perdition could now no longer understand and interpret, the prophet Jeremiah bewails in the Lamentations, saying, *The young children asked bread, and there was no man to break it unto them;* but this 'earth is overturned in its place with fire,' because on beholding the miracles of the faithful it consumed itself with the firebrand of envy. For because envy is always used to be engendered from pride, she 'perished in her place by fire,' who for this reason burned with envy, because she did not abandon pride. And so 'the earth, which first had bread, was afterwards overturned by fire,' because the Synagogue, which set before men the commandments of God in the Law, by persecuting the new-born Church consumed itself with the fire of envy. Was it not in flames with the brands of its jealousy when on seeing the miracles of our Redeemer, it said by certain of its own, *What do we? for this Man doeth many miracles?* Or, surely, *Ye see that we gain nothing; yea, the whole world goeth after Him.* They saw that whereby they should have been converted, and they were thereby rendered the more froward. They sought to stifle Him, Whom they beheld give life to the dead. They held the Law in the mouth, but persecuted the Author of the Law. Therefore *the earth, from which bread arose,* was *overturned in its place by fire.* Because Judæa had in her own self first the Law that should refresh, and afterwards envy that should consume her. For the describing of whom it is further added, xxxii. Lam. 4, 4. John 11, 47. ib. 12, 19.

Ver. 6. *The stones of it are the place of sapphire, and her clods gold.*

52. The proclaim of the glory going before adds to the guilt of the sin following after. For the fall of every individual is of worse criminality, in proportion as before he fell he had the power to be of greater excellency. Thus let it be told of Judæa, let it be told what she was, and let the great- xxxiii.

Job 28. 6. PROPH. ness of the excellencies going before grow into the heightening of the delinquencies succeeding afterwards. *Her stones were the place of sapphires, and her clods of gold.* What do we understand in this place by ' gold,' but the minds of the Saints and strong ones? For in Holy Scripture ' stones' are wont to be taken sometimes on the side of bad and sometimes on the side of good. For when a ' stone' is put for insensibility, by ' stones' we have hard hearts denoted. Matt 3, 9. Whence also it is said by John; *God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham;* who, surely, by the name of ' stones' denotes the hearts of the Gentiles, at that time hard and insensible in respect of unbelief. And by the Ez. 11, 19. Prophet the Lord promises, saying, *And I will take the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you an heart of flesh.* Again by ' stones' the minds of the strong ones are used to be denoted. And hence it is said to the Saints by Peter, 1 Pet. 2, 5. *Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood.* And by the Prophet the Lord promises to Is. 54, 11—13. the Church when she comes, saying, *Behold, I will lay down thy stones in order, and lay thy foundations with sapphires; and I will make thy bulwarks jasper, and thy gates in cut stones, and all thy borders into pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord.* For He did ' lay down in her the stones in order,' in that He distinguished the holy souls in her by the diverseness of merits. He ' laid her foundation in sapphires,' which same stones retain in themselves the likeness of the colour of the air, because the strength of the Church is firmly based in souls seeking after heavenly things. And because a jasper is of a green hue, He ' made his bulwarks of the jasper,' because they are advanced against her adversaries in the defence of Holy Church, who growing green and fresh by interior desires, do not die off by any drying up of damnable lukewarmness. But He ' set her gates in cut stones.' For those are the ' gates' of the Church, by whose life and teaching the multitude of those that believe enter into her. Who also for this reason, that they are rich in great deeds, and that what by speaking they declare, by living they exhibit, are described to be not plain but ' cut stones.' For in whosesoever life right practice is seen, there is as it were represented in those same

persons what they have done. Where also embracing all the number of the Elect in a general roll, he added, *and all thy borders in pleasant stones.* And as though we, on hearing these things, begged that he would make known those stones that he spoke of, he added, *All thy children shall be taught of the Lord.* And therefore because from out of Judæa there were never wanting holy souls, to lead a heavenly life, it is said, *her stones are the place of sapphires.* And because with an extraordinary brightness of life and of wisdom she shone forth by faith, it is added, *and her clods gold.* What is denoted by 'clods,' but the assemblages and multitudes of the several orders? Now clods are compacted of moisture and dust; and so all they that being watered with the dew of grace confessed with a true-sighted knowledge that by the debt of death they are dust, whilst they were made to shine bright by excellency of life, lay in her like 'clods of gold.' 'Clods' this earth had in the Prophets, 'clods' she had in the teachers, 'clods' in the Ancient Fathers, who by an extraordinary infusion of grace kept themselves close in unanimity of profession and of practice. Therefore let him say, *And the clods of it gold;* because therein the multitude of the spiritual souls shone with greater perfection, in proportion as it bound itself up in God and its neighbour with greater unanimity. Book XVIII.

53. But this gold was afterwards dimmed by the darkness of unbelief. Whose blackness, surely, the Prophet Jeremiah surveying laments, saying, *How is the gold become dim? how is the most fine gold changed!* For 'the gold is become dim,' in that that ancient brilliancy in them of faith and innocency, upon unbelief coming upon them, dulled itself with the night of wickedness. Therefore, what it *was* since we have heard, even that *her stones are the place of sapphires,* now let us hear next wherefore that People so beloved of God lost these great blessings. It goes on; Lam. 4, 1.

Ver. 7. *The pathway of the bird it knew not, nor beheld the eyes of the vulture.*

54. Who is denoted in this place by the title of 'the bird,' saving He, Who in ascending poised skywards the fleshly body, which He took to Him. Who furthermore is fitly designated by the title of the 'vulture' as well. For the xxxiv.

Jon 28, 7. 8. PROPH.

'vulture' while it is flies if it sees a carcase lying, drops itself down for the devouring of the carcase, and very often it is in this way taken in death, when it has come from on high after the dead animal. Rightly therefore is the Mediator between God and Man, our Redeemer, denoted by the appellation of a 'vulture,' Who whilst remaining in the loftiness of His Divine Nature, marked as it were from a kind of flight on high the carcase of our mortal being down below, and let Himself drop from the regions of heaven to the lowest places. For in our behalf He vouchsafed to become man, and while he sought the dead creature, He found death among us, Who was deathless in Himself. Now 'the eye' of this 'vulture' was the actual aiming at our Resurrection, because He Himself being dead for three days set us free from everlasting death. And so that faithless people of Judæa saw Him in the state of mortality, but how by His death He should destroy our death, it noted not. It beheld, indeed, the vulture, but 'the eyes of the vulture it did not behold.' Which People, whereas it refused to regard the ways of His humility, whereby He lifted us up on high, 'knew not the pathway of the bird.' For neither did it betake itself to consider that His humility would lift us to the heavenly heights, and the aim of His death renew us to life. Therefore *the pathway of the bird it knew not, nor beheld the eyes of the vulture.* For though it saw Him Whom it held bound in death, it refused to see what wonderful glory by His death followed our life[b]. And hence it was kindled to the cruelty of persecution likewise; it refused to receive the words of life; the Preachers of the kingdom of heaven, by forbidding, by evil entreating, by smiting it thrust from it. Which same, being so thrust off, abandoning Judæa whereto they had been sent, were dispersed for the gathering together of the Gentile world. And hence it is further added;

Ver. 8. *The children of the dealers have not trodden it, nor hath the lioness passed through it.*

[1] Institutores. [2] negotiatores.

55. In all the Latin copies we find the word 'Instructors[1]' put down, but in the Greek we find 'traders[2],' whereby it may be inferred that in this passage the several copyists from being ignorant put 'instructors' ('institutors') instead of

[b] al. 'what glory in our life should follow from His death.'

'institores' ('dealers'). For we call traders 'institores' on this account, that they are 'instant in plying work.' But both the one phrase and the other, though they disagree in utterance, yet are not at variance in meaning, because all those who instruct the practice of the faithful, carry on a spiritual dealing, that while they supply preaching to their hearers, they should receive back from them faith and right works; as where it is written touching Holy Church, *She maketh fine linen, and selleth it.* Concerning whom it is likewise said a little after in that place, *She perceiveth that her trading is good.* Who in this place are called 'instructors' but the holy Prophets, who busied themselves by prophesying to instruct the ways of the Synagogue unto faith? 'Sons' of whom, assuredly, the holy Apostles are styled, who that they should believe God Man were begotten to the same faith by the preaching of those. Concerning whom it is said to the Church by the Psalmist; *Instead of thy fathers are born to thee children, whom thou mayest make princes over all the earth.* But because the Apostles being thrust off went out from the borders of the Synagogue, it is rightly said now, *The children of the dealers have not trodden it.* Since the 'children of the dealers' would have 'trodden it,' if the holy Preachers had borne down the badness of the Synagogue with the heel of goodness. But if those same 'dealers' we take for the Preachers of Holy Church, then the 'children' of the dealers, nothing hinders us taking for the Shepherds and Teachers who followed the way of the Apostles. Which did not 'tread' the Synagogue, because whilst their fathers, i. e. the Apostles, were thrust off by that Synagogue, they themselves too ceased from the calling of her.

Book XVIII.

Prov. 31, 24.

v. 18.

Ps. 45, 16.

56. Which same Synagogue 'the lioness passed not by,' because Holy Church, being devoted to the assembling together of the Gentiles, never any longer employed itself upon that people of Judæa. Now the Church is rightly called 'a lioness,' in that persons living amiss in bad habits, it kills with the mouth of holy preaching. Hence to the first Shepherd himself it is said as to the mouth of this lioness; *slay and eat.* For what is 'slain' is killed out of life, whilst that which is eaten is changed into the body of

Acts 10, 13.

Job 28, 9. Proph. the person eating. Accordingly it is said, 'Slay and eat;' i. e. 'Kill those to the sin wherein they are living, and convert them from themselves into thine own members.' And because this Church is the body of the Lord, the Lord likewise Himself by the voice of Jacob is called 'a lion' in respect of Himself, a 'lioness' by the body, when it is said Gen. 49, 9. to him under the likeness of Judah, *To the prey, my son, art thou gone up. Thou hast couched as a lion, and as a lioness. Who shall rouse him up?* Accordingly this lioness it is never said 'passed not' Judæa, but 'passed not through.' For upon the Apostles preaching, in the first instance three thousand out of her, and afterwards five thousand, believed. And so the Church 'passed by' the way of the Synagogue, but 'passed not through,' because a few from out of her it carried off to faith, but yet that faithless people it did not utterly make extinct to misbelief. But, what we have already often said, being cast off by the infidelity of the Jews it turned away to the calling of the Gentiles. Hence it is yet further said of that same lioness;

Ver. 9. *He stretcheth out his hand to the flint; he overturneth the mountains by the roots.*

xxxvi. 57. For 'he stretched out his hand to the flint,' because He put forth the arm of His preaching to the hardness of the Gentiles. Hence the same blessed Job, forewarned of the history of his suffering being destined to be made known to Job 19, 24. the Gentiles, says, *Let these things be graven with an iron pen in a plate of lead, or hewn in the flint.* But whom in this place do we understand by the 'mountains' saving the powerful ones of this world, who on account of earthly substance swell themselves high? Concerning whom the Ps. 144, 5. Psalmist saith, *Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke*; but the mountains are overturned from the roots, because, on Holy Church preaching the highest powers of this world fell from their inmost thinking into the adoring of Almighty God. For 'the roots' of the mountains are the inmost thoughts of the proud. And 'the mountains fall from the roots,' because for the worshipping of God, the powers of the world are laid level with the earth from the lowest thoughts. For by a root the hidden thought is rightly denoted, because by means of that which is not seen, being

within, there bursts out what should be seen without. And hence on the side of good it is said by the Prophet, *And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.* As though it were expressed in plain speech; 'Deep down below the thought springs up, that up on high the reward may be rendered back.' So then let him say, *He stretcheth out his hand to the flint, and overturneth the mountains from the roots.* For whilst the sacred preaching sought the hardness of the Gentiles, it entirely frustrated the loftiness of the proud. But because those whom it empties of earthly thoughts, it fills with heavenly gifts, and those, whom it drains of interest below, it waters with streams from Above, it is directly added;

Book XVIII. Is. 37, 31.

Ver. 10. *He cutteth out streams in the rocks.*

58. i. e. in the hard hearts of the Gentiles he opened the rivers of preaching; as it is likewise spoken by the Prophet of watering the dryness of the Gentiles; *He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water springs.* And in the Gospel the Lord promises, saying, *He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* What we then heard promised, we now see fulfilled. For see how in the holy preachers, not sprung from Judæa, through the universal Church spread over the whole world, streams of heavenly precepts flow forth in abundance from the mouths of the Gentiles. Thus because in the rocks He opened streams, from hard hearts too there flowed forth the river of holy preaching. It goes on;

xxxvii. Ps. 107, 35. John 7, 38.

And his eye hath seen every precious thing.

59. It is a thing to be especially borne in mind, that each individual soul is rendered the more precious in the sight of God, by how much it is for love of the truth the more despised in its own eyes. *When thou wast little in thine own sight, did I not make thee the head of the tribes of Israel?* As if he said in plain terms, 'Thou wast great with Me, because thou wast contemptible to thyself, but now because thou art great to thyself, thou art become contemptible to Me.' And hence it is said by the Prophet; *Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in*

xxxviii. 1 Sam. 15, 17.

Jon 28, 11. Myst. *their own sight!* Thus every man becomes the more worthless to God, in proportion as he is more precious to himself, so much the more precious to God as he is for His sake more worthless to himself; because *He regardeth the lowly, and knoweth the high afar off. Every precious thing*, therefore, *His eye saw.* In Holy Scripture God's 'seeing' is put for 'choosing,' as it is written in the Gospel; *When thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee*, i. e. I chose thee whilst placed under the shadow of the Law.' Therefore He 'saw every thing precious,' because He chose the lowly. *God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.* He 'saw the precious thing' when the human soul, having base views of itself, He visited with the illumination of His grace. Of which same soul it is said by the Prophet; *If thou separatest the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth.* For the present world is vile with God, but the soul of man is precious to Him. He, then, that 'separates the precious from the vile' is called 'as the mouth of God,' because by that man God deals forth His words, who by speaking the things that he is able to speak, plucks out the soul of man from the love of the present world. And because the teachers of the New Testament are brought to this, that even the hidden darkness of allegories in the Old Testament they search out, it is rightly added;

Ps. 138, 6. John 1, 48. 1 Cor. 1, 27. Jer. 15, 19.

Ver. 11. *The depths also of the floods He hath searched, and the hidden things He hath brought to light.*

xxxix. 60. For what else are here called 'floods' but the sayings of the ancient Fathers. For who might be able to estimate how vehement a flood, whilst he was founding the Law, burst forth from the very breast of Moses? how vehement a flood gushed from the heart of David? what mighty streams of floods flowed out from the lips of Solomon and all the Prophets? Now of these 'floods' Judæa held the shew, when in keeping the surface of the letter she knew not the depths thereof. But we, who, on the Lord coming, seek therein interior spiritual things, search their 'depths.' And this thing the Lord is Himself said to do, because by Himself vouchsafing it we are enabled to do it; and so by us, who follow not the letter which killeth, but the spirit which maketh alive, the Lord 'searcheth the depths of the floods,

and bringeth the hidden things into light,' because the statements of the Law, which the too dark history makes obscure, a spiritual interpretation now lights up. And hence 'Truth' when speaking in parables in the Gospel bade the Disciples, saying, *What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye on the house tops.* For the plainly spoken words of these interpreting have made the sentences of the ancient Fathers henceforth clear to us. Hence the Prophet Isaiah viewing the words plain by the interpretation of Holy Church, not obscured by the darkness of allegories, exclaimed, saying, *The place of rivers, the broadest and open streams.* For the sayings of the Old Testament were as narrow and close streams, which bound up the sentences of their lore in the darkest gathering together. But on the other hand the teaching of Holy Church are 'streams both broad and open,' because her declarations are at once many in number to those that find them, and plain to those that seek. Therefore he says, *The depths of the floods he hath searched, and the hidden things he hath brought to light.* Because when He poured into His interpreters the spirit of understanding, He set open the ancient obscurities of those prophesying. And that Holy Church henceforth knows and sees by the Spirit, which the Synagogue before was not at all able to understand by the letter. Whence Moses also, while he spoke to the people, veiled his face; surely, in order to denote that that People of the Jews knew the words of the Law, but did not at all see the clearness of that Law. And hence it is rightly said by Paul; *But even to this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.* But because the declarations of God are, without His wisdom, never fathomed at all, (for except him who hath received His Spirit, none knoweth in any sort His words,) the holy man adds words touching the subject of searching out that same Wisdom of God, saying;

BOOK XVIII.

Mat. 10, 27.

Is. 33, 21.

2 Cor. 3, 15.

Ver. 12—15. *But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof: neither is it found in the land of them that live pleasantly. The depth saith, It is not with me, and the sea saith, It is not with me. Fine gold shall not be given for it: neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.*

Job 28, 12—15. Lit. xl.

61. It is first to be noted, that two points be proposed to himself, and two he adds making answer. For to this that he said above, *Where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding?* he answered in this verse, *The depth saith, It is not with me; and the sea saith, It is not with me.* But in answer to that which he had said, *Man knoweth not the place thereof; neither is it found in the land of them that live pleasantly;* he gave the lower verse, saying, *Fine gold shall not be given for it; neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.* So then he answered to both questions, yet in adding to what he had objected, not in solving it. For when he enquired the place of Wisdom, and then answered below, *The depth saith, It is not with me;* he pointed out not where it was, but where it was not. Again when he said that 'the price thereof was not known by man,' and rejoined to this below, *fine gold shall not be given for it;* he shewed not what was the price of it, but what was not. For it is plain to all that neither can this wisdom of man be held in a place, nor be bought with riches. But the holy man being full of mystical ideas sends us on for the making out other things, so that we should look for not wisdom created, but Wisdom creating; for except in those words we search the secret depths of allegory, surely those things that follow are utterly deserving of disregard, if they be estimated according to the historical narration alone. For a little afterwards he saith, *Gold and glass cannot equal it;* and while, as we know, glass is far and incomparably of lower price than gold, wherefore after the name of gold, which is unquestionably a precious metal, by way of unlimited praise did he say that 'glass' too is not equal to wisdom? So by the mere difficulty of the letter, we are forced that we be quicksighted to the mystical sentiments in these words. So then what wisdom is it, the holy man is contemplating, but that of which Paul the Apostle saith, *Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God?* Concerning which it is written by Solomon; *Wisdom hath builded her house;* and of which the Psalmist saith; *In wisdom hast Thou made all things.* Of this same Wisdom 'man knoweth not the price,' because he findeth nothing worthy of the estimate thereof. Now this price of Wisdom

1 Cor. 1, 24. Prov. 9, 1. Ps. 104, 24.

is not said at once ‘ to be,’ and not ‘ to be known,’ but as for this reason ‘ not to be known,’ because it is wanting, in that manner of speaking by which a person caught in a strait, when he finds no remedy of succour, is wont to confess that ‘ what to do he knows not.’

62. So then ‘ not to know the price of this Wisdom,’ is to find no meriting of meet practice whereby to obtain it. For we give a price with this object, that instead of it we may possess ourselves of that object which we long after. But what have *we* given, that we should deserve to obtain this Wisdom, which is Christ? Since it is by grace we are redeemed. For those works alone by living badly have we given, for which if a just return were reserved, not Christ but punishments would be rendered back[c]. But man deserved one thing in the way of justice, and obtained another in respect of grace. Let Paul bear witness, before the time that his mind received the seed of unbought truth, with what briars of error he was overlaid. *Who was before*, he says, *a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.* Let him testify for what sort of persons Christ deigned to die. *While we were yet sinners*, he says, *Christ in due time died for the ungodly.* We, then, who on Wisdom’s coming were found ungodly, what title of good practice have we given, whereby we might obtain to receive that Wisdom? ‘ The price of this Wisdom man knoweth not,’ because whoso

1 Tim. 1, 13.

Rom. 5, 8. 6.

[c] See l. ii. on Ezekiel, Hom. vii. §. 9. ‘ One may also by the ‘ porch’ understand ‘ Faith.’ For it is before the steps and the gate: because we come first to faith, that after by spiritual gifts as steps the heavenly life’s entrance may be reached. For not by virtues do we come to faith, but by faith we attain to virtues. For Cornelius the centurion, whose alms before baptism by the Angel’s witnessing received praise, did not by works come to faith, but by faith came unto works. For even to him by the Angel it is said, (Acts x. 4.) *Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up before God.* For if he had not believed the true God even before Baptism, to whom did he pray? Or how had Almighty God heard him, unless he had sought of Himself in good works to be perfected? He knew therefore that the Creator of all things was God, but that His Almighty Son was Incarnate he knew not. For neither could he have done good works, unless he had first believed. For it is written, (Luke xi. 6.) *Without Faith it is impossible to please God.* He therefore had faith, whose prayers and alms were able to please God. But by his good practice he earned (promeruit) that he should come to know God perfectly, and believe the Mystery of His Incarnation, in order that he might attain to the Sacraments of Baptism. By faith then he came to works, but by works he was completed in faith.’ This seems to give the true notion of that merit of ‘ congruity,’ which our xiiith Article implies as belonging to works done by the aid of partial grace and faith before full grace is received.

Job 28, 15. Myst. is separated from brute animals by the understanding faculty of reason, understands that he is not saved by his own merits, knows and sees that he had not given any thing of good practice that he might come to faith. For it is as it were to give a price for the obtaining of Wisdom, to anticipate the coming to the knowledge of God by the merchandize of one's conduct.

63. He had learnt that of this Wisdom there is 'no price,' who said, *Who hath first given unto Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again.* Hence it is written again, *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast.* Hence concerning himself he again speaks, saying, *By the grace of God I am what I am.* And as by the inspiration of this same grace, the practices of the parts of virtue are at once engendered in the heart, so that from free will also conduct should follow, which after this life the Eternal Recompensing should answer to, he thereupon added, *And His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain.* But there are those who exult that they are in a sound state by their own powers, and pride themselves that by their own merits going before they have been redeemed, whose declaration, surely, is found to be contradictory to themselves, because, while they maintain themselves at once 'innocent' and 'redeemed,' this very name of redemption they make null and void in themselves. For every one that is redeemed is doubtless set free from some sort of captivity. Whence then is this said person redeemed, if he was not before captive under sin? It is plain then that he greatly misjudges who judges so. For heavenly grace does not find desert of man, in order to make it come, but after it has come, causes the same; and God, when He comes to the undeserving mind, at once sets it forth to Himself deserving by so coming, and causes therein merit for Him to recompense, whereas He had found only that for Him to punish.

Rom. 11, 35. Eph. 2, 8. 1 Cor. 15, 10.

64. It is good herein to recall the eyes of the mind to that robber, who from the jaws of the devil ascended the Cross, and from the Cross mounted to Paradise. Let us behold what sort of person he came to the stock of the Cross, what sort of person he went from the Cross. He came bound

by his brother's blood, he came bloodstained, but by interior grace he was changed on the Cross; and he who inflicted death upon a brother, of the Lord when dying proclaimed the life, saying, *Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom.* On the Cross the nails had bound fast his hands and feet, and there remained nought in him that punishment left free, but the tongue and the heart. But God inspiring it, he offered all to Him that he found free in himself, so that according to that which is written, he should *with the heart believe unto righteousness, and with the mouth make confession unto salvation.* But that in the hearts of the faithful there are three virtues in a special manner abiding, the Apostle testifies, saying, *And now abideth faith, hope, charity;* all of which the robber being filled with instantaneous grace both received and kept on the Cross. For he had faith, who believed the Lord was about to reign, when he saw Him dying equally with himself; he had hope, who begged for admission into His kingdom, saying, *Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.* Charity also in his death he livingly retained, who at once charged home for his iniquity a brother and fellow robber dying for the like crime, and preached to him the life which he had learnt, saying, *Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly: for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man hath done nothing amiss.* He that came such to the Cross by sin, see what he departed from the Cross by grace. He confessed the Lord, Whom he beheld dying along with himself by human frailty, at the time that the Apostles denied Him, Whom they had seen doing miracles by divine power.

Book XVIII.

Luke 23, 42.

Rom. 10, 10.

1 Cor. 13, 13.

Luke 23, 40. 41.

65. But they who make out that man is saved by his own powers, fancy that that same confession of man is from the efficacy of man by himself. Which if it were so, the Psalmist would not say in praise of God, *Confession and great doing are His work.* So that from Him we receive it to confess what is right, by Whom it is granted us to practise what is great also. Therefore because we have not given aught of good practice, whereby we might deserve to be vouchsafed this Wisdom, let it be rightly said, *Man knoweth not its*

Ps. 111, 3.

Job 28, 15. Myst. *price.* Inasmuch as he that henceforth uses reason looks down upon himself under the perception of this Wisdom so much the deeper, in proportion as he more truly knows the interior depth of that Wisdom, so as to see that he has attained to her being unworthy, by the which it is brought to pass without price, that he should be made worthy. Concerning which it is well said;

Neither is it found in the land of those that live sweetly.

xli. 66. What is denoted in this passage by the title of the 'land,' saving the soul of man? Concerning which the Ps. 143, 6. Psalmist saith, *My soul thirsteth after Thee, as a land without water.* But this wisdom cannot be 'found in the land of those that live sweetly;' because the man that is still fed with the pleasures of this life, is severed from the perception of Eternal Wisdom. For if he were truly wise-minded, being banished from the interior delights, he would mourn over that blind estate of his exile, whereinto he has fallen. For Eccl. 1, 18. hence it is said by Solomon; *He that addeth knowledge, addeth pain also.* For the more a man begins to know what he has lost, the more he begins to bewail the sentence of his corruption, which he has met with. For he sees whence and whereto he has fallen; how that from the joys of Paradise he has come to the woes of the present life, from the companyings of the Angels to carings for necessities; he considers in what a number of perils he now lies prostrate, who before without peril disdained to stand; he bewails the exile which being accursed he undergoes, and sighs after the state of heavenly glory, which he might be enjoying in security, if he had not had a mind to commit sin. Which Ps. 31, 22. same the Psalmist regarding rightly, saith, *I said in my fear, I am cast out from the face of thine eyes.* For after contemplating the interior joys of the vision of God, and the assemblage in fellowship of the Angels holding fast, he brought back his eyes to things beneath, he saw where he was laid low, who was created for this end that he might have been able to stand in heavenly realms; he considered where he was, and where he was not he grieved to think, he mourned for himself as 'cast out from the face of God's eyes,' because by comparison with the interior light, he had felt the darkness of his exile, that he was undergoing, to be the

heavier. Hence it is that he admits not to his soul the solace of any favouring from the present life, saying, *I refused my soul to be comforted.* For oftentimes the rich ones of this world, being afflicted with weariness of spirit, are used to regard the good gifts bestowed on them in time, and to soften down their sadness. For when they feel themselves affected with something of sadness, they look at their horses, they survey the vessels of their gold and their silver, they go the round of their estates. And while they gladly carry their eyes through the range of these temporal things, they get the better of the sadness of soul that has risen up. And hence Truth saith to them also in the Gospel; *But woe unto you that are rich, for ye have your comfort here.* But the holy man, who mourns for this, that he has fallen from everlasting joys, does not admit consolation on the ground of things temporal, saying, *I have refused my soul to be comforted.* As though he said in plain speech; 'I, who do not grieve for the loss of temporal things, am utterly unable to be comforted by the abundance thereof.' And as though we ourselves on hearing these things said to him, 'What then dost thou seek, who refusest to find comfort in those things that are of the world?' he thereupon added; *I remembered God, and was delighted.* As if he said in plain terms; 'Me not even the abundance of things earthly doth cheer, but even able to see, gives me delight.' So then, this is the bitterness the remembrance only of my Maker, Whom as yet I am not of the wise, that whilst they are lifted up on high in hope, they do not bow down the mind here to any delights. For hence it is written; *The heart of the wise is where there is sorrow, and the heart of fools where there is mirth.* Hence James saith: *Be afflicted and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.* Hence 'Truth bears witness by Itself, saying, *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.*' So wisdom cannot be 'found in the land of those that live sweetly;' because they are the more really foolish, in proportion as whilst parting with the greater things they delight themselves in the least. Hence Peter blames that same folly of the wicked, saying, *That count for pleasure the indulgence of the*

Book XVIII.

Luke 6, 24.

Eccl. 7, 4.

James 4, 9.

Matt. 5, 4.

2 Peter 2, 13.

Job 28, 15. *day of defilement and stain*[b]. Hence Solomon saith, *I* Myst. Eccl. 2, 2. *counted laughter an error; and said to mirth, Why art thou vainly deceived?* Accordingly let the holy man say concerning Wisdom, *Neither is it found in the land of those that live sweetly.* In this way plainly, that those who in this world live sweetly, are still so besotted, that this very thing too they know not, viz. Whence they have fallen. It follows;

Ver. 11. *The bottomless pit saith, It is not with me.*

67. What does he call 'the bottomless pit' but the hearts of men, which are at once by the fall all floating, and by the mistiness of double-dealing full of darkness? Which same 'bottomless pit' declares that this Wisdom 'is not with' it; because the wicked mind, while it longs to be wise in a carnal way, shews itself foolish as to things spiritual. For because as Paul testifies, *the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God*, so much the more completely is every one rendered foolish within, as he endeavours to appear wise without. Concerning this abyss it is said by John, *And I saw an Angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled.* For by the number of a thousand, he denoted not the quantity of time but the universality, with which the Church exercises dominion. Now the old serpent is bound with a chain and cast into the bottomless pit, because being tied up from the hearts of the good, while he is shut up in the minds of lost sinners, he rules over them with worse cruelty. And a little while afterwards he is described as brought up out of the hollow of the bottomless pit, in that from the hearts of the wicked which now rage secretly, having then gotten power against the Church, he shall break out into the violence of open persecution. And so this bottomless pit, wherein the devil is now kept hidden, 'saith that Wisdom is not with it,' because by

Rev. 20, 1—3.

[b] Reading '*coinquinationis*,' '*coinquinationes*.' Vulg. as ours.

cked deeds it shews itself a stranger to true wisdom. For, hilst a man covers wickedness in the heart, but with the outh gives forth flatteries, whilst he overshadows his purses with double-dealing, whilst he eschews words of single-ndedness as foolishness, whilst he shuns the ways of simple nocency, it is as if the Abyss denies that she has the isdom of God. And because minds that are devoted to is world, are disturbed by the cares and anxieties of the esent life, and therefore are quite unable to enjoy the pose of that Wisdom, it is rightly added;

And the sea saith, It is not with me.

68. For what is there denoted by the name of the sea xliii.
ving the bitter disquietude of worldly minds, which while ey fall foul of one another in enmities by turns, dash emselves together like encountering waves? For the life worldly persons is rightly called 'a sea;' because, whilst is agitated by the tempestuous stirrings of actions, it is arted from the tranquillity and stedfastness of interior Visdom. Contrary to which it is well said by the Prophet, *Upon whom shall My Spirit rest but upon him that is* Is.66,2. *umble and quiet, and that trembleth at my words?* But om earthly minds the Spirit flies the further in proportion s He findeth no rest with them. For it is hence that it is aid of certain by the Psalmist; *Bruising and unhappiness* Ps.13,7. *s in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known.* Vulg. 14, 7. From which same bruising of disquietude the Lord calls us Com.Pr. ack, saying, *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are* Mat.11, *eavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon* 28. 29. *you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.* For what is nore toilsome in this life than to be fevered with earthly lesires? or what is there more full of repose here, than to ong for nought of this world? It is hence that the Israelitish people received the keeping of the Sabbath in gift; it is ience on the opposite side that Egypt was smitten with a nultitude of flies. For the people, that follows God, receives he Sabbath, i. e. the rest of the spirit, that it should not be vorn out in this life by any craving of carnal passions. But Egypt, which bears a likeness of this world, is stricken vith flies. For the fly is an excessively intrusive and restless

Job 28, 14. Myst. creature. Wherein what else is there represented but the intrusive solicitations of carnal desires. Whence it is said elsewhere, *Dying flies destroy the sweetness of the ointment.* Ecc. 10, 1. Because superfluous thoughts, which in the mind taken up with things carnal are for ever both springing into life and dying away, destroy that sweetness, with which each individual has been inwardly anointed by the Spirit; because they do not suffer him to enjoy the unadulteratedness thereof. And so Egypt is smitten with flies, because the parts of those persons that love an earthly life, while they are stricken with the disquietudes of their desires, are by the swarms of carnal imaginations borne down beneath, so that they cannot be lifted up to the desire of interior rest. Whence when Truth comes to the heart with the wonderful help of His pitifulness, He first banishes therefrom the fevers of carnal thoughts, and afterwards distributes in it the gifts of the parts of virtue. Which same the sacred history of the Gospel excellently conveys to us; in which when the Lord being besought was led by the way in order to restore the daughter of the ruler Matt. 9, 25. to life, it is added directly, *But when the crowd were put forth He went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.* So the crowd is cast forth without, in order that the damsel may be raised up; because if the importunate throng of worldly cares be not first expelled from the inner recesses of the heart, the soul, which lies dead in the interior, cannot rise up. For whilst it lets itself loose amongst the countless imaginings of earthly desires, it never in any degree gathers itself up to the consideration of self. Thus then, knowing and seeing that in these waves of perturbations Wisdom cannot dwell, he says, *And the sea saith, It is not with me.* For no man receives her fully, saving he who strives to withdraw himself from all the drifting to and fro of carnal Ecclus. 38, 24. courses. And hence it is said elsewhere, *Write wisdom in the time of leisure. And he that is lessened in doing, even* Ps. 46, 10. *he shall win her.* And again, *Be still, and know that I am God.*

69. But how is it that we know that most of the old Fathers at once interiorly held fast this Wisdom in its life, and outwardly administered the affairs of the world in ordinary? Do we call Joseph deprived of the attainment of

this Wisdom, who in the time of dearth taking upon himself the affairs of all Egypt not only furnished provisions to the Egyptians, but by the skilfulness of his administration preserved the life of foreign people as well that came to him? Did Daniel prove a stranger to this Wisdom, who, when he was made by the king of the Chaldeans in Babylon chief of the governors, was busied with greater charges in proportion as by a higher pitch of dignity he was likewise set above all? Whereas then it is plain that very often even the good are engaged in earthly charges with no interest, we plainly see that in this way the citizens of Jerusalem sometimes render services[1] to Babylon, in like manner as oftentimes the citizens of Babylon pay suit and service to Jerusalem. For there are some persons who preach the word of life for the displaying of wisdom alone, they minister the succour of alms from the passion of vain-glory; and indeed the things they do seem to be proper to Jerusalem, but yet are they citizens of Babylon.

Book XVIII.

[1] angarias

70. In this way then it sometimes happens, that they who love the heavenly Country alone, seem to be subjected to the charges of the earthly country. Whose ministration however is distinguished from the practices of the wicked for the most part in act, but sometimes before the Judge Above in thought only. For being full of wisdom from Above, they distinguish how they may at once be free to one thing inwardly, and busied with another thing outwardly; so that if perchance by God's secret appointment aught of the concerns of this world is charged upon them, they coveting it not, they may yield to God Whom they delight in, and from the love of Him, may interiorly desire His Vision only, but from the fear of Him externally discharge the course imposed upon them with humility, that they should at once desire to be disengaged to God by force of the free attachment of loving affection, and again fulfil the charges imposed upon them by force of the constitution of servitude; and when the affairs of business make a din without, within the most peaceful repose is maintained in love; and the turmoils of employments outwardly clamouring, reason as presiding judge disposes of within, and with tranquil governance regulates the things, which all around

Job 28, 15. Proph. Alleg.

it are too little tranquil. For as force of mind is at the head for bridling the motions of the flesh, so very often the love of tranquillity regulates aright the imposed turmoils of business; because exterior charges, if they be not desired with a wrong affection, may be executed with a mind not disordered but regulated. For holy men never court them, but lament them when put upon them by secret appointment, and though in respect of a better aim they shun them, yet in respect of a submissive mind they bear them. Which same they are above every thing eager to avoid if it might be, but fearing the secret dispensations of God, they lay hold of that they eschew, and execute what they avoid. For they go into their conscience, and they there take counsel what the secret will of God would have, and being conscious that they ought to be subject to the Appointments on high, they humble the neck of the heart to the yoke of Divine Providence. But he that is such as this, whatever turmoils are at work without, they never reach to his interior parts. And so it comes to pass that there is one thing maintained within in wish and another thing maintained without in office, and that with this Wisdom their hearts are filled, being no longer troubled and disordered, but in a state of tranquillity. Well, then, is it said thereof, that *the depth saith, It is not with me, and the sea saith, It is not with me.* As though it were expressed in plain speech; 'The troubled minds of the worldly cry out by the mere circumstance of their not being quiet, that they are widely separated from true Wisdom. But because this Wisdom of God, abiding with the Father before the ages of the world, was to be made Incarnate in the end thereof, so that in order to redeem the human race, It should send not the holy Angels, not just men, but in the manifestation of very sight comes by Its own Self, it is rightly subjoined,

Ver. 15. *Fine gold shall not be given for it.*

xliv. 71. For what is denoted by 'fine gold,' save the holy Angels, who are rightly called both 'gold,' and 'fine[1];' 'gold,' because they shine with brightness of righteousness; 'fine,' because they never had any defilement of sin. But for just men, so long as they are in this corruptible flesh with the conditions of mortality, 'gold' they may indeed be, 'fine

1 'obryzum.'

gold' they cannot be in any wise; because the *corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind, that museth upon many things.* For though in this life they may shine by an extraordinary brightness of righteousness, yet they never purely lack the dross of sins; as John the Apostle bears witness, who says, *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;* and as James affirms, who puts a proof, saying, *For in many things we all offend.* As the Prophet likewise beseeches, who says, *Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.* Those then are termed 'fine gold' who whilst holding fast in that innocency, wherein they were created, at once shine with the brightness of righteousness, and are stained with no dross of sins, no not the very least.

Book XVIII. Wisd. 9, 15. 1 John 1, 8. James 3, 2. Ps. 143, 2.

72. But because in the stead of this Wisdom no one of the Angels was to be sent as the Redeemer of the human race, lest in those Angels, who, we have been taught, have often appeared in aid of men, any man should rest his hope, it is said, *Fine gold shall not be given for it.* As though it were expressed in plain speech; 'By Its own Self shall Wisdom be manifested, in order that the human race may be redeemed from sin.' There is no Angel sent in His stead; because it must needs be that by the Creator the creature should be set free. And hence the Lord saith in the Gospel, *If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.* But the holy man, being filled with the Spirit of that same Wisdom, foresaw that there would not be wanting in Judæa some that should put their hope in the Lawgiver, and make Moses the author of their salvation, even as to the man that had been healed, speaking evil, they say, *Be thou His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples.* Whence it is yet further introduced with propriety,

John 8, 36. John 9, 28.

Nor shall silver be weighed in exchange thereof.

73. For because the divine revelations are often denoted by 'silver,' by the term of silver it may be that the writers of that revelation are also understood, whose life shone amidst the crowds of their fellow-creatures with the light of virtuous attainments. But because the Law was able to point out sins, but not able to take them away, it was not any one of

xlv.

Job 28, 16. Proph. Alleg. the ancient Fathers, nor the Lawgiver Moses, that became the Redeemer of mankind. So 'silver is not weighed in exchange of this Wisdom,' because all that have had power to be holy, by comparison with the Only-begotten Son of God are accounted to have been of no worth, who except they had known and seen that they were servants of that 'Wisdom,' could never at all have been holy. For to this end were they sent, that in the hearts of men they might by preaching prepare a way for this 'Wisdom,' neither yet that for her, but by her they might govern the peoples under their charge. For because it was certain that by the accession of periods of time, the ailments of the waning world should grow to a height, it was brought about that in the end of ages the Eternal Wisdom of God should by Its own Self come to this full grown sick one, with his overgreat infirmity, i. e. to the human race lying sick, throughout the whole world, that preachers having been dispatched beforehand, like a kind of visitors, the power of the physician might afterwards come so much the more efficacious, in proportion as the sickness of the diseased had more grown to a head. But because there is no one sent in the stead of Him for the saving of us, let it be rightly said, *Nor shall silver be weighed in the exchange thereof.* Forasmuch as the life of the just men who preached, with whatever light of holiness it might abound, doth not by its presence make exchange for the coming of Heavenly Wisdom to us. But there were multitudes of the Gentiles, who being attached to the systems of discipline of this world's wise ones, observed those things which are honourable among men, and believed that, honourable dealing being observed, they were sure to be saved, nor any longer sought a Mediator between God and man, since they held the teaching of the philosophers as being sufficient for them. In contempt of whom it is directly added;

Ver. 16. *Nor shall it be compared to the dyed colours of India.*

xlvi. 74. For what is meant by India, which furnishes a black people, saving this world, wherein the life of man is engendered dark in respect of sin? Now 'the dyed colours of India' are the wise ones of this world, who though in respect of infidelity, and oftentimes in respect of behaviour, they be

foul, yet before the eyes of men are stained with the hue of overlaid honourableness. But the coeternal Wisdom of God is not 'compared to the dyed colours of India,' in that he, who really takes It in, discovers how widely it differs from those human beings whom the world has worshipped for wise ones. And the very words of His precepts differ from the wise ones of this world, in that while they strain after eloquence, their sayings appear as if fair in shew and in the staining of the dye, and while they lack the power of realities, feign themselves to be something else than what they are by combination of words as by overcoated colours. But on the other hand the instruction of Wisdom is at once fair by preaching and shining by unadulterated truth, nor does it by deceit set itself forth one thing outwardly, and retain another thing inwardly, nor in its sayings aim to appear fair by brilliancy of speech, but by uncorruptness of truth. Therefore in its precepts the Wisdom of God is not 'compared to the dyed colours of India,' since whereas it has not the stained adornments of eloquence, it pleases like a robe without dye. Which staining of the dye Paul rightly despised, when he said, *Which things also we speak not in the words that man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.* For he chose rather to display this 'Wisdom' by the simple transparency of truth alone, but not to stain it with the dyeing of speech. It follows;

1 Cor. 2, 13.

Nor to the most precious sardonyx stone, nor to the sapphire.

75. That the sardonyx and sapphire are not precious stones, who would be ignorant? And whereas there be many other precious stones, which immeasurably exceed these in the account of greatness, why is the sapphire or the sardonyx especially called precious, when either stone by comparison with other stones is most contemptible? except that those stones which are described as precious, when we know not to be precious, we look out for some other thing in the meaning of them. For the sardonyx bears the likeness of red earth, but the sapphire has an aereal appearance. And so it may be that in the sardonyx by the red earth human beings are denoted, in the sapphire by the aereal appearance the Angels are denoted. For whereas the sardonyx stone bears the appearance of red earth, it not improperly denotes man;

Job 28, 16. Proph. Alleg. because 'Adam' himself, who was created the first, is called in the Latin tongue 'Red earth.' What does it mean then that it is said that this Wisdom is not 'compared to the sardonyx nor to the sapphire,' but that He, Who is the 'Power of God and the Wisdom of God,' i. e. the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, surpasses all things by such preeminent greatness that neither the first man on the earth, nor the Angels in heaven, can be compared to Him. And hence it is said by the Psalmist, *Who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of God*[c] *can be likened unto the Lord?* Ps.89,6.

76. But it is possible that by the sardonyx stone the Fathers of the Old Testament, while by the sapphire the Preachers of the New Testament, are set forth. For the first, though they maintained an extraordinary life of righteousness, yet lent themselves to carnal procreation. Therefore whereas it is plain that they did some things of an earthly kind, they are not inappropriately denoted by the sardonyx stone, which as we before said bears the appearance of 'red earth.' But by the sapphire, which is of an ethereal hue, we suitably understand the Preachers of the New Testament, who laying aside the desires of carnal gendering, followed after the things of heaven alone. And hence the Prophet beholding the holy Apostles mounting above all the desires of the flesh with spiritual fervency, being struck with admiration, saith, *Who are these that fly as clouds?* Is.60,8. As though he expressed it in plain speech; 'We go along by the way of earth, in that we are still involved in marryings and employ acts of the flesh upon the propagating offspring; but these walk not on earth, but they 'fly as clouds,' who whilst they aim at heavenly things touch nought connected with earthly desires.' Therefore he says that the Wisdom of God is not 'compared to the sardonyx or the sapphire stone.' As though he told in plain terms, saying, 'To Him, Who is seen Man among men, neither any in the old Fathers nor any in the new is equalled, in that from His Godhead He derives it that in His Manhood He hath not any like to Him.' Whence it is yet further added;

Ver. 17. *The gold and the glass cannot equal it.*

[c] 'Sons of God' was a common expression for Angels.

77. Who that is sound of perception would deem it worthy to understand this according to the letter? For ' glass,' as we said above, is of much less worth than ' gold,' and after it was said that ' gold is not equal' to this Wisdom, it is yet further, as if heightening, subjoined, that ' glass' too cannot equal it either. But the bare letter failing us in the historical sense, sends us to investigating the mystery of the allegory. For we know that the metal gold shines with a superior brightness to all the metals. But it is of the nature of glass that whilst seen without it shines with perfect transparency in the inside. In every other metal whatever is contained within is hidden from sight, but in the case of glass, every liquid, such as it is contained within, such is it shewn to be without, and, so to say, all the liquid in a glass vessel, whilst shut up is open. What other thing, then, do we understand by ' gold and glass,' but that heavenly Country, that society of blessed citizens, whose hearts mutually one with another at once shine with brightness, and are transparent by pureness; which John in Revelations had beheld, when he said, *And the building of the wall of it was of jasper, and the city was of pure gold like unto clear glass.* For because all the Saints shall shine in the supreme brightness of bliss, it is described as constructed of gold. Book XVIII. xlviii. Rev. 21, 18.

78. And because their very brightness itself is reciprocally open to them in each other's breasts, and when the countenance of each one is marked his conscience is penetrated along with it, this very gold is described as like pure glass. For there the mind of every person no bodily frame of limbs will hide from the eyes of his fellow, but the interior will be given to view, the very harmony of the body too will also be plain to the eyes of the body, and each one will be in such wise distinguishable to another, as now he cannot be distinguishable to himself. But now our hearts, so long as we are in this life, because they cannot be seen in one by another, are enclosed not within glass vessels, but within vessels of earthenware; in which same clay in respect of the mind being affected the Prophet dreaded to stick, when he said, *Deliver me out of the clay, that I may not stick fast.* Which very tabernacle of bodies, Paul calls ' our earthly house,' saying, *For we know that if our earthly house of* Ps. 69, 14. 2 Cor. 5, 1.

Job 28, 17. Proph. Alleg. *this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* Therefore in this earthly house so long as we live, the mere partition wall of our corrupt state, so to say, we do not penetrate with the eyes of the mind, and the hidden things in each other we cannot see. Hence Holy Church desiring to see the form of her Spouse in the Godhead, yet not being able, because the fashion of His Eternal Being, which she longed to behold, His Manhood, which He took upon Him, hid from her eyes, says mourning in the Song of Cant. 2, 9. Songs; *Behold he standeth behind our wall.* As if she said in plain speech, 'I desire to see HIM now already in the appearance of His Godhead, but I am still shut out from the sight of Him by the wall of the flesh He has assumed.' Therefore so long as we live in this corruptible flesh, we see not the thoughts of the hearts in one another. Whence it is 1 Cor. 2, 11. said by the same Paul, *For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man that is in him?* And again; 1 Cor. 4, 5. *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.* So then that City, which manifests the hearts of them that are in it to each severally and reciprocally, is described 'of gold like to pure glass,' that by the gold it may be represented bright, and by the glass transparent.

79. But though all the Saints therein glitter with such wonderful brightness, and shine through with such extraordinary transparency, yet that Wisdom, by a likeness of Which they have all that they are, they 'cannot equal.' Therefore it is well said, *The gold and the glass cannot equal it.* For it is for this that all the Saints are brought to those eternal joys, that they may be like to God, 1 John 3, 2. as it is written, *When He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.* And yet it is Ps. 89, 9. written, *O Lord God of hosts, who is like unto Thee?* And ib. v. 6. again; *Who shall be like unto God among the sons of God?* Whence then shall they be like, and whence not like, but that to this 'Wisdom' they at once be like for a semblance and not like for equality? For by gazing on the Eternity of God, it is brought to pass upon them that they should be

eternal, and while they receive the gift of seeing Him, by the receiving of Blessedness they copy the thing that they see. They are both like, then, because they are made blessed; and they are not like to the Creator, because they are a creature. And thus they both have a certain likeness to God, because they are without end; and yet they have no equality to the Incomprehensible One, because they have comprehensible being. Therefore let it be justly said, *The gold and the glass is not equal to it.* For with whatever brightness and transparency the Saints may shine, it is one thing for men to be wise in God, and another thing for a Man to be the Wisdom of God. Which same Wisdom he was truly acquainted with, who never ventured to liken any one of the Saints to the Mediator between God and man. And hence it is added; Book XVIII.

Neither shall vessels of gold high and overtopping be exchanged instead of it.

80. For a 'lofty vessel of gold' did Elijah prove, 'a lofty vessel of gold' Jeremiah, 'lofty and overtopping vessels of gold' the old Fathers were. But this Wisdom of God, in order that It might redeem us from a carnal kind of life, appeared in the flesh, and he, who did not see that Wisdom in a true light, supposed that the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, was one of the Prophets, which Christ the eyes of the Elect held for God, when they saw Him but Man. Hence it is said by Him to the holy Disciples, *Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?* And when they thereupon answered Him, *Some say that Thou art John the Baptist; some Elias: some Jeremias, or one of the prophets;* they were immediately interrogated touching their own perception; *But whom say ye that I am?* To whom Peter, answering directly in the voice of the whole Church, says, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.* Thus, then, forasmuch as according to the declaration of Paul we 'know Christ, the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God,' for this Wisdom Peter refused to 'exchange vessels of gold lofty and overtopping,' because he understood concerning it no other thing than it was. For as has been said, a great 'vessel of gold' was John, a great 'vessel of gold' Elijah, a great 'vessel of gold' Jeremiah. Now whoever accounted xlix. Mat. 16, 13. &c.

Job 28, 18. that That God was any one of these, did ‘ exchange a vessel of gold high and overtopping’ for this ‘ Wisdom.’ But for this Wisdom the Church doth not ‘ exchange vessels of gold high and overtopping,’ because it holds that Christ the Son of God is not one of the Prophets, but the One Lord of the Prophets. For seeing that ‘ Wisdom’ Itself had come to her, she refused to keep herself fixed in those golden vessels, but was eager with certainty of faith to pass on into that Wisdom.

Proph. Alleg.

Cant. 3, 3. 4. Whence she saith in the Song of Songs; *The watchmen that keep the city found me; to whom I said, Saw ye him, whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him, whom my soul loveth.* For whom do we take ‘ the watchmen that go about the city’ to be, but the former fathers and prophets who set themselves to watch by the voice of holy preaching for our safe keeping? but when the Church sought her Redeemer, she would not fix her hope in those same ancient preachers, in that she says, *It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth.* For Him she had not been able to find, if she had been unwilling ‘ to pass by through these.’ For the unbelievers had rested themselves in those warders, who believed that Christ the Son of God was any one of those. With the voice then and the faith of Peter, Holy Church passed by the watchmen she found, in that she disdained to believe the Lord Who had been prophesied to be any one of the number of the prophets. Thus, let it be said, *nor shall vessels of gold high and overtopping be exchanged for it.* Because the Elect severally both venerate the life of the Saints for their loftiness, and yet do not take up with it for error. For those whom they know to be simple men they do not all compare to God-Man. Whence it is further added;

Ver. 18. *Nor shall they be mentioned in comparison with her.*

l. 81. For all the Elect of the Country Above are indeed holy and righteous, but by a participation of Wisdom, not by comparison therewith. For what are men compared with God? Now ‘ Light’ Wisdom is used to be called, ‘ light’ also the servants of Wisdom are wont to be called; but She as light

John 1, 9. lighting up, they as light lighted up; as it was written; *That*

was the true Light, Which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. But to these it is only said, *Ye are the light of the world.* 'Righteousness' indeed Wisdom is called, 'righteousness,' the servants of 'Wisdom' as well are called; but She righteousness that maketh righteous, they righteousness that is made righteous. For of God, Who is 'Wisdom,' it is said, *That He might Himself be just and the Justifier;* but these say, *that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.* So then it is after one sort that the 'Light lighting' is to be reverenced, after another that the 'light lighted' is to be; in one way the Righteousness that maketh righteous, in another way the righteousness that is made righteous. Now Wisdom both is and is wise, nor has She for one thing to be, and for another thing to be wise; but the servants of 'Wisdom' are indeed able to be wise men, but yet they have not their being the same thing as being wise. For they may be, and not be wise. Wisdom hath life, but She hath not one thing, and is another thing, inasmuch as to Her it is that to be that it is to live. But the servants of 'Wisdom' whilst they have life are one thing and have another, inasmuch as to whom to be is not the identical thing it is to live. For they may be after a sort, and yet not live. For to them it is one thing to be, and a different thing to live; for in the very first parent they had being by a beginning, and life by an addition, since man was first made of the earth, and afterwards as it is written; *He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.* Now Wisdom hath being, She hath life; but this, which She hath, She Her own Self is. Wherefore She lives unchangeably, because she lives not by contingency, but essentially. He then alone Is truly with the Father and the Holy Spirit, to Whose Being ours compared, is not to Be. To this Wisdom if we be joined, we are, we live, we are wise. If we be compared to Him, we neither are wise, nor live at all, nor are.

Book XVIII. Matt. 5, 14. Rom. 3, 26. 2 Cor. 5, 21. Gen. 2, 7.

82. Hence it is that all the Saints, when they advance in the vision of God, the more they view the interior depths of the Divine Nature, see so much the more that they themselves are nothing. For it is no where read that Abraham confessed that he was dust and ashes except when he obtained to enjoy the converse of God. For he

Job 28, 18. Proph. Gen. 18, 27. says, *I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes.* For he would perchance have thought that he was something, if he had not perceived at all the true Essence that is above himself. But when for the contemplating of the Unchangeable One he was transported above himself, being filled with so mighty a power of contemplation, when he saw Him, he saw that he himself was nought but 'dust.' Hence it is that the Prophet

Ps. 103, 14. lxx. being filled with the same Wisdom crieth out, *Remember, O Lord, that we are but dust;* who again viewing the

Ps. 102, 26. 27. unchangeableness of that Essence, saith, *Yea, all of them shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed; but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail.* Hence it is said to

Ex. 3, 14. Moses, *I AM THAT I AM: Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, HE THAT IS hath sent me unto you.* For He alone truly IS, Who alone unchangeably continues. For every thing that now is after this way, and now after another way, is near to not being. For to continue in its standing, it is not able. And in some manner there is a going on not to be, whilst from that which was, it is by the enfarings of time ever being led away to some other thing. In order then that in the partaking of His Body we may be something, let us know and see our own selves, that we are well nigh nothing. Therefore it is well said, *Nor shall they be made mention of in comparison with her;* because vessels of gold high and overtopping, which by participation of Wisdom are fit objects of reverence to us, in comparison of Wisdom are not even fit to be made mention of. But because this Wisdom is by secret means poured into the hearts of men, (as it is

John 3, 8. likewise said of the Holy Spirit, *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth;*) for this reason it is added,

For wisdom is drawn from out of sight.

li. 83. 'Wisdom is drawn from out of sight;' because whereas She is invisible, She cannot be found saving in an invisible way. And She is rightly said to be 'drawn' also, because like as we draw the breath, that the body may

live, so from the interior depths of Wisdom the Spirit is derived, that the soul may hold on to life. Whence the Psalmist says, *I opened my mouth, and drew in the spirit.* Which very Wisdom, taking human flesh together with [1] a rational soul, when It had presented Itself from the interior depths close at hand, because this world could not behold its invisible Maker, Him Whom it saw visible Man, it also knew as invisible God as well. The Gentile world was converted from the darkness of its unbelief, being before full of pride by its avertedness; signs and wonders being exhibited, faith gained ground; and the faith being spread abroad, the summit of Holy Church shone forth in reverence with all men. To which same when there were wanting open adversaries, she began to be tried by her own members. For numberless heresies springing up in her, they arrayed against her wars of cruel conflict. For she must be exercised at this time by toiling, who is on the way to her recompensing in that which follows. Whereby it has come to pass that some in her should come forth who should call the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, created mere man, but one by grace made God, and should attribute so much of holiness to him as they knew in the rest of the Saints, the same being His servants. Which persons blessed Job being inspired with the spirit of prophecy, reproves by the laying out of his sentence, saying,

Book XVIII. Ps. 119, 131.

[1] al. 'by the medium of.'

Ver. 19. *The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it.*

84. What do we take 'Ethiopia' for, save the present world, which same by darkness of hue denotes a sinning people in the foulness of its merits. But sometimes by the name of Ethiopia the Gentile world in a special manner is used to be denoted, as being before black by the sins of unbelief. Which same on the Lord's coming, the Prophet Habakkuk beheld affrighted with fear, and says, *The tents of the Ethiopians tremble with dread, the tents of the land of Madian.* David also, the Prophet, seeing that the Lord should come for the redeeming of Judæa, but that first the Gentile world should believe, and afterwards Judæa should follow, (as it is written, *Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved,*) says,

lii.

Hab. 3, 7.

Rom. 11, 25. 26.

Job 28, 19. Prophh. Ps. 68, 31. *Ethiopia, her hand shall be first to God;* i. e. 'before that Judæa believes, the Gentile world being black with sins offers itself to Almighty God to be saved.' Now the topaz is a precious stone, and because in the Greek tongue *to pan* is the word for 'every thing,' on this account, that it shines bright with every colour, it is called 'topazium,' as if 'topantium.' But when the Gentile world being turned to God believed, numbers from out thereof were so enriched with the gift of His Spirit, that as with many colours, so with many virtues they shone bright. But lest any man be lifted up by the virtues he has received, it is now said by the holy man, *The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it.* As though he said in plain words; 'No one of the Saints, with however many virtues he may be filled, yet as being gathered out of this blackness of the world can equal Him, concerning Whom it is written, *That holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.* For we, though we are made holy, yet are not born holy, because by the mere constitution of a corruptible nature we are tied and bound, that we should say with the Prophet, *Behold, I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me.* But He only is truly born holy, Who in order that He might get the better of that same constitution of a corruptible nature, was not conceived by the combining of carnal conjunction.

Luke 1, 35.

85. To this Wisdom as it were a kind of 'topaz from Ethiopia wished to equal itself,' when a certain heresiarch[1] said, 'I do not envy Christ being made God, because, if I wish even I myself may be made so.' Who imagined our Lord Jesus Christ to be God, not by the mystery of His conception, but by the promotion of grace, arguing by misconstrued proofs that He was born simple man, but in order to be God that He had advanced by merit, and on this account reckoning that both himself and any others might be made coequal with Him, which same are made the children of God by grace, not understanding nor minding that *the topaz from Ethiopia is not equal to Him.* For it is one thing for those born men to receive the grace of adoption, and another for one by the power of Godhead pre-eminently to have come forth God from the very conception.

[1] Nestorius, *Ben.*

Neither is it possible that to the glory of the Only-begotten, possessed by nature, another glory should be equal, received by grace. *For the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus,* is not as this one raves one person in His human nature, and another person in the Divine nature. Not conceived and brought forth simple man, did he afterwards obtain of merit that He should be God. But the Angel announcing it, and the Spirit coming, at once the Word in the womb, at once within the womb the Word made flesh, (that unchangeable Essence likewise remaining to Him which He has coeternal together with the Father and the Holy Spirit,) did take upon Him within the bowels of the Virgin that whereby He might both being Impassible suffer passion, and Undying suffer death, and whilst Eternal before the world be a temporal being in the end of the world, that through an unutterable mystery, by a holy conception and an inviolate birth, in accordance with the verity of both natures, the same Virgin should be at once the handmaid and mother of the Lord. For so is it said to her by Elisabeth; *Whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?* And the Virgin herself at her conception said, *Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it unto me according to thy word.* And though He the same Being is one thing from the Father, and another thing from the Virgin, yet He is not one Person from the Father, and another Person from the Virgin. But the same Person is Eternal from the Father and the same a temporal being from the Mother, the same Who made is the same That was made, the same *beautiful in form above the children of men* in respect of the Divine nature, and the same of whom it is written; *We saw Him, and there was no shew, and He hath not form nor comeliness,* in respect of the human nature. The same before the world from the Father without mother, and the same at the end of the world from the Mother without father. The same a Temple, the same the Builder of the Temple. The same the Maker of the work, and the same the Work of the Maker, remaining one Person from both and in both natures, neither being confounded by the conjunction of natures, nor doubled by the distinctness of natures. But because it is not these points that we have

Book XVIII.

1 Tim. 2, 5.

Luke 1, 43.

v. 38.

Ps. 45, 2.

Is. 53, 2.

Job 28, 19. Proph. taken upon us to treat of, let us return to our course of interpreting.

86. We are to take note that the holy man, in order to shew that the Angels are widely distant from this Wisdom, says, *Fine gold shall not be given for it.* Which same that he might exhibit the ancient Fathers likewise, dealers with sacred Revelation, as inferior, added, *Nor shall silver be weighed in exchange thereof.* Moreover that he might point out that the wisdom of the philosopher is far beneath this Wisdom, he brought in; *Nor shall it be compared to the dyed colours of India.* And he subjoined, *Nor to the most precious sardonyx stone, nor to the sapphire.* Furthermore in order that he might shew that in that city Above no one attains to equality with the Only-begotten, he added; *The gold or the glass cannot equal it.* That he might make it appear that the Prophets likewise were beneath It, he added; *Neither shall vessels of gold high and overtopping be exchanged instead of it. Nor shall they be mentioned in comparison with her. For Wisdom is drawn from out of sight.* Whilst at the last, that he might rebuke the very heretics in the Church themselves as well, who on coming from the error of the Gentile world, split through pride the faith which they receive, he added; *The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it.* As though he taught in plain words, saying; These, who from the blackness of sin come to conversion, cannot equal God-Man, though they may seem to shine bright with many virtues for colours. And that their pride might be thrown over, it is fitly added,

Neither shall the purest dyes be brought into comparison.

liii. 87. For those are called 'the purest dyes' who are genuinely humble, and genuinely holy, who know that from themselves indeed they have not the shew of virtuous attainments, but that they hold this by the gift of accessory grace. For they would not be 'dyed,' if they had possessed holiness by nature. But they are 'the purest dyes' because they keep in themselves with humility the superinduced grace of virtues which they have been vouchsafed. Hence it is that it is said by the voice of the Spouse concerning Holy Church; Cant. 6, 10. *Who is this that cometh up blanched?* For because Holy Church has not a heavenly life by nature, but on the Spirit

adding Itself is arrayed with beautifulness of gifts, she is described not as white but as 'blanched.' And observe, that when he said above, *Nor shall it be compared to the dyed colours of India*, those same colours he did not bring in 'pure;' but in this place that he might distinguish the dye of true virtues from that staining of the philosophers, whilst speaking of dyes, he added 'the purest.' For those are rightly called 'the purest dyes,' who were aforetime foul through wicked deeds, yet, the Spirit coming upon them, are clothed with the brilliancy of grace, that they should appear to be far other than they were. Whence also 'Baptism,' i. e. 'dyeing[1],' is the name given to our own descending into the water itself. Since we are dyed, and we, who were before unsightly by the deformity of bad habits, on the faith being received are rendered beautiful by grace and the adornment of virtues. It goes on; Book XVIII.

[1] 'tinctio.'

Ver. 20, 21. *Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? Seeing that it is hid from the eyes of all living.*

liv. 88. It deserves to be especially considered, that it is asked by the holy man, whence Wisdom cometh. For It 'comes' from Him from Whom It sprung. Now because It is born of the Invisible and Coeternal Father, the way thereof is hidden. Whence too it is said by the Prophet, *And who shall declare His generations?* Now 'the place of the understanding of her' is the mind of man, which mind the Wisdom of God when it has filled makes holy. And so because both He is invisible, from Whom It came forth, and it is doubtful to us in whose mind It rests as being understood, it is rightly said now, *Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?* But this is very wonderful that it is directly brought in; *seeing that it is hidden from the eyes of all living.* For if the Wisdom, which is God, had been 'hidden from the eyes of all living,' then surely this Wisdom no one of the Saints would have seen. But see, I hear John agreeing with this sentence, who says, *No man hath seen God at any time.* And again, when I look at the Fathers of the Old Testament, I learn that many of those, as the very history of the Sacred Reading is witness, did see God. Thus Jacob saw the Lord, who says,

Is. 53, 8.

1 John 4, 12.

Job 28, 20. 21. *For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.* Moses likewise saw God, of whom it is written, *And the* Gen. 32, 30. *Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto* Ex. 33, 11. *his friend.* This very Job saw the Lord, who says, *I have* Job 42, 5. *heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye* Is. 6, 1. *seeth Thee.* Isaiah saw the Lord, who saith, *In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne* 1 Kings 22, 19. *high and lifted up.* Michaiah saw the Lord, who saith, *I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left.* What does it mean then that so many Fathers of the Old Testament have witnessed that they have seen God, and yet concerning this Wisdom, which is God, it is said, *Seeing that it is hid from the eyes of all living?* And John saith, *No man hath seen God at any time.* Seeing this, which is plainly given us to understand, that so long as we live here a mortal life, God may be seen by certain semblances, but by the actual appearance of His Nature He cannot be seen, so that the soul being inspired with the grace of the Spirit should by certain figures behold God, but not attain to the actual power of His Essence? For hence it is that Jacob, who bears witness that he had seen God, saw Him not save in an Angel. Hence it is that Moses who 'talked with God face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend,' in the midst of the very words of his speaking, says, *If* Ex. 33, 13. Vulg. *Shew me Thy face.* *I have found grace in Thy sight, shew Thyself manifestly to me, that I may see Thee.* For assuredly if it were not God with whom he was talking, he would have said, 'Shew me God,' and not 'Shew me Thyself.' But if it was God, with Whom he was speaking 'face to face,' wherefore did he pray to see Him, Whom he was seeing? But from this requesting of his, it is inferred that Him he was athirst to perceive in the brightness of His Incomprehensible nature, Whom he had already begun to see by certain semblances, that so the heavenly Essence might be present to the eyes of his mind, in order that for the vision of Eternity there might not be interposed to him any created semblance with the circumstances of time. And so the Fathers of the Old Testament saw the Lord, and yet according to the voice of John, *No man hath seen God at any time;* and according

to the sentence of blessed Job, the Wisdom Which is God is 'hid from the eyes of all living,' because by persons settled in this mortal life He was both able to be seen in certain comprehensible images, and not able to be seen in the Incomprehensible Light of Eternity. Book XVIII.

89. But if it is so, that by some while still living in this corruptible flesh, yet growing in incalculable power by a certain piercingness of contemplation, the Eternal Brightness is able to be seen, this too is not at variance with the sentence of blessed Job, who says, *Seeing that it is hid from the eyes of all living;* because he that sees 'Wisdom,' Which is God, wholly and entirely dies to this life, that henceforth he should not be held by the love thereof. For no one has seen Her, who still lives in a carnal way, because no man can embrace God and the world at one and the same time. He who sees God dies by the mere circumstance alone, that either by the bent of the interior, or by the carrying out of practice, he is separated with all his mind from the gratifications of this life. Hence yet further it is said to that same Moses too; *For there shall no man see Me, and live.* As though it were plainly expressed, 'No man ever at any time sees God spiritually and lives to the world carnally.' Hence Paul the Apostle too, who as yet had learnt the invisible things of God, as he himself testifies, *in part*, related that henceforth he was dead all over to this world, saying, *By Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.* For as we have already said far above, it is not enough for him to say, *I am crucified to the world*, except he also first out with, *The world is crucified to me*, that he might not only bear witness that he was dead to the world, but also that the world was dead to himself, so that neither he himself should covet the world, nor the world henceforth covet him. For if perchance there be two in one place, of whom one is alive, and the other dead, though the dead person does not see the living, yet the live one does see the dead. Now the Preacher of God, in order that he might shew that by the abasement whereby he had cast himself down in humbling himself he was now become such, that neither he himself longed after the world, nor the world after him; not only says that he was crucified

Ex. 33, 20.

1 Cor. 13, 12. Gal. 6, 14.

Job 28, 20. 21. Prophet. to the world, that he himself as one dead should not see the glory of the world, that he might long after, but likewise declared the world crucified to him, wherein he had cast himself down to the ground with such humility, that the world itself likewise, as if dead to him, could not now at all see Paul as being humble and despised.

90. But we are to know that there were some persons, who said that even in that region of blessedness God is beheld indeed in His Brightness, but far from beheld in His Nature. Which persons surely too little exactness of enquiry deceived. For not to that simple and unchangeable Essence is Brightness one thing, and Nature another; but Its very Nature is to It Brightness, and the very Brightness is Nature. For that to Its votaries the Wisdom of God should one day display Itself, He Himself pledges His word, saying, *He that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.* As though He said in plain terms, 'Ye who see Me in your nature, it remains that ye should see Me in Mine own nature.' Hence He says again; *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* Hence Paul says, *For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, then shall I know even as also I am known.*

John 14, 21. Matt. 5, 8. 1 Cor. 13, 12.

91. But because it is said concerning God by the first preacher of the Church, *Whom the Angels desire to look upon*, there are some who imagine that even the Angels never see God; and yet we know that it is spoken by a sentence of Truth, *In heaven their Angels do always behold the face of My Father, Which is in heaven.* Does, then, Truth sound one thing and the preacher of truth another? But if both sentences be compared together, it is ascertained, that they are not at all at variance with one another. For the Angels at once see and desire to see God, and thirst to behold and do behold. For if they so desire to see Him that they never at all enjoy the carrying out of their desire, desire has anxiety without fruit, and anxiety has punishment. But the blessed Angels are far removed from all punishment of anxiety, because never can punishment and blessedness meet in one. Again, when we say that these Angels are

1 Pet. 1, 12. Mat. 18, 10.

satisfied with the vision of God, because the Psalmist too says, *I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness,* we are to consider that upon satisfying there follows disgust. So then, that the two may rightly agree together, let Truth say, *that they always see;* and let the excellent Preacher say, *that they always desire to see.* For that there be not anxiety in desire, in desiring they are satisfied, and that there be not disgust in their satisfying, whilst being satisfied they desire. And therefore they desire without suffering, because desire is accompanied by satisfying. And they are satisfied without disgust, because the very satisfying itself is ever being inflamed by desire. So also shall we too one day be, when we shall come to the fountain of life. There shall be delightfully stamped upon us at one and the same time a thirsting and a satisfying. But from the thirsting necessity is far absent, and disgust far from that satisfying, because at once in thirsting we shall be satisfied, and in being satisfied we shall thirst. Therefore we shall see God, and it shall be the very reward of our labour, that after the darkness of this mortal state we should be made glad by His light being approached unto. Book XVIII. Ps. 17, 15.

92. But when we talk of His light being approached, that presents itself to the mind which Paul says, *Dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, Whom no man hath seen, nor can see.* And again, I hear what the Psalmist says; *Approach unto Him, and be enlightened.* How then by approaching are we enlightened, if we see not the very Light by which we are able to be enlightened? But if by approaching to Him we see the very Light whereby we are enlightened, how is it declared to be unapproachable? Wherein it deserves to be considered that he called it unapproachable, but to every man that minds the things of men. Since sacred Scripture is used to mark all the followers of carnal things with the designation of the being 'men.' Whence the same Apostle says to certain persons at strife, *For whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?* To which he soon afterwards appends, *Are ye not men?* And hence he elsewhere brought forward the testimony; *Eye hath not seen,* 1 Tim. 6, 16. Ps. 34, 5. 1 Cor. 3, 3. 4. 1 Cor. 2, 9.

Job 28, 20. 21. Proph. *nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.* And when he had described this as hidden from 'men,' he 1 Cor. 2, 10. added directly, *But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit;* separating his own self from the designation of 'man' in that having been transported above man he now tasted what is divine. So also in this place, when he told of the light of God being unapproachable, that he might shew to what persons unapproachable, he added, *Whom no man hath seen, no nor can see.* After his manner calling 'men' all whose taste is for things of man. Because they who have a taste for what is divine, are doubtless above men. Therefore we shall see God, if by a heavenly conversation we obtain to be above men. Not yet that we shall so see Him as He Himself sees His very own Self. For the Creator sees Himself in a way far unlike to that in which the creature sees the Creator. For as to the unmeasurableness of God there is a certain measure of contemplation set to us, because we are limited by the mere weight that we are a creature.

93. But assuredly we do not so behold God, as He sees Himself, as we do not so rest in God, as He rests in Himself. For our sight or our rest will be to a certain degree like to His sight or His rest, but not equal to it. For lest we should be prostrate in ourselves, the wing of contemplation, so to say, uplifts us, and we are carried up from ourselves for the beholding Him, and being carried away by the bent of the heart and the sweetness of contemplation, in a certain manner go away from ourselves into Himself, and now this very going away of ours is not to rest, and yet so to go is most perfectly to rest. And so it is perfect rest because God is discerned, and yet it is not to be equalled to His rest, Who doth not pass on from Himself into another, that He may rest. And therefore the rest is, so to say, like and unlike, because what His rest is, our rest imitates. For that we may be blessed and eternal for everlasting, we imitate the Everlasting. And it is a great eternity to us to be imitating eternity. Nor are we heritless of Him Whom we imitate, because in seeing we partake, and in partaking

imitate Him. Which same sight is now begun by faith, but is then perfected in Appearance, when we drink at the very springhead the Wisdom coeternal with God which we now derive through the lips of those that preach, as it were in running streams.

BOOK XIX.

The interpretation being carried on from the last part of the twenty-first verse of the twenty-eighth chapter to the twenty-first verse of the following chapter exclusive, various meanings are laid open not less learnedly than piously, chiefly concerning Christ and the Church.

Myst. 1. WHAT wonder is it if the Eternal 'Wisdom' of God is not able to be seen, when the very invisible things themselves as well, which were created thereby, cannot be embraced by the eyes of men? So then by things created we learn with what self-abasement to revere the Creator of all things; so that in this life the human mind should not dare to usurp to itself aught belonging to the Appearance of Almighty God, which He reserves for His Elect only as their reward in the ensuing Recompensing. Whence after it was said, *It is hid from the eyes of all living*, we have the words thereupon introduced next;

Chap. xxviii. 21. *And is kept close also from the fowls of the air.*

i. 2. For in Holy Scripture 'birds' are sometimes given to be understood in a bad sense, and sometimes in a good sense. Since by the birds of the air occasionally the powers of the air are denoted, being hostile to the settled purposes of good men. Whence it is said by the mouth of Truth, *And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it;* in this way, because evil spirits besetting the minds of men, whilst they bring in bad thoughts, pluck the word of life out of the memory. Hence again it is said to a certain rich man full of proud thoughts; *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head.* For foxes are very cunning animals, that hide themselves in ditches and caves; and when they face the light, they never run in straight courses, but always by crooked doublings.

Matt. 13, 4.

Matt. 8, 20. Luke 9, 58.

But the birds as we know with lofty flight lift themselves into the air. So, then, by the name of 'foxes,' the crafty and cunning demons, and by the title of the 'birds of the air' these same proud demons are denoted. As if he said, 'The deceitful and uplifted demons find their habitation in your heart; i. e. in the imagination of pride,' 'but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head,' i. e. 'My humility findeth not rest in your proud mind.' For as by a kind of flight that first bird lifted itself up, which said in the uplifted imagination of the heart; *I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the North. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the Most High.* Mark how he in flying sought the regions on high with pride. Which same flight also he recommended to the first of human kind as well. For they themselves by flying as it were tried to go above their own selves, when it was told them that they should taste and be like gods. And while they seek after the likeness of the Deity, they lost the blessings of immortality, which same would not by dying have gone into the earth, if they had been willing to stand with humility upon the earth. Is. 14, 13.

3. But, on the other hand, 'the birds of the air' are wont to be put in a good sense, as in the Gospel the Lord, when He was declaring a likeness of the kingdom of heaven by a grain of mustard seed, said, *Unto what is the kingdom of heaven like? and whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and cast into his garden, and it grew and waxed a great tree, and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.* For He is Himself 'a grain of mustard seed,' Who, when He was planted in the burial place of the garden, rose up a great tree. For He was 'a grain,' whereas He died, but 'a tree,' whereas He rose again. 'A grain,' through the abasement of the flesh, 'a tree,' through the mightiness of His Majesty. 'A grain,' because *we have seen Him, and He was not regarded;* but 'a tree,' because *fairer in form than the children of men.* The branches of this tree are the holy preachers. And let us see how wide they are stretched out. For what is said concerning them? *Their sound is gone forth into all the earth, and their words to the end of the* Luke 13, 18. 19. Is. 53, 2. Ps. 45, 2. Ps. 19, 4.

Job 28, 22. Myst. *world.* In these 'boughs the birds of the air rest,' because the holy souls, which by a kind of wings of virtues lift themselves up from earthly thinking, do in the word and consolations of these take breath from the wearying of this life. And so in this place after it was said of 'Wisdom,' *It is hid from the eyes of all men;* it is rightly added, *It is kept close also from the fowls of the air:* because being settled in the corruptible flesh, these very persons do not in seeing penetrate the mightiness of His Nature, who earn by holy contemplation even now to fly with wings. Where it is well added,

Ver. 22. *Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.*

ii. 4. Who are denoted by the title of 'destruction and death,' save the evil spirits, who proved the inventors of 'destruction and of death,' as of their leader himself under the appearance of his minister it is said by John, *And his name was Death.* Unto whom all spirits of pride being subject, say concerning this 'Wisdom,' Which is God, *We have heard the fame thereof with our ears,* in this way, that the vision thereof doubtless they could not have with complete blessedness. For perfectly to see the Wisdom coeternal with God, is the same thing as to 'have.' Hence it is said to John of the reward of one conquering, *I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.* For in this life we are able either to know or see sometimes a thing even which we have not received; but to have 'a new name written on a white stone' is in an eternal recompense to have the knowledge of God strange to the faculties of men, which no man can know saving he that receiveth it. Therefore as we have said, because to see God is the same thing that it is to have, therefore the evil spirits do not see this 'Wisdom,' because being cast off through pride they were never able to have It. For they shut the eyes of the heart to the light of It, resisting the rays thereof shed abroad over them, as that may be also understood of the same evil spirits, which is written, *They are of those that rebel against the light.* And so for evil spirits to have 'heard of the fame of Wisdom,' but not to have seen that Wisdom, is at once to have ascertained the power thereof by its efficacy, and yet to have been unwilling

Rev. 6, 8.

Rev. 2, 17.

Job 24, 13.

to stand humbly under it. Hence it is said by the voice of Truth of the actual head of evil spirits, *He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth.* It follows; Book XIX. John 8, 44.

Ver. 23. *God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof.*

iii. 5. This Wisdom coeternal with God has 'a way' in one sense, and in another sense 'a place;' but only a 'place,' if a person understand it a place not local. For God is not capable of being held close after the manner of a body. But as has been said, a place not local is meant. The 'place' of 'Wisdom' is the Father, 'the place' of the Father is 'Wisdom,' as, Wisdom Herself bearing testimony, it is said, *I am in the Father, and the Father in Me.* So then the same identical Wisdom has 'a way' in one sense, and 'a place' in another sense; 'a way' by the passing of the manhood, 'a place' by the settledness of the Godhead. For She passes not by in the respect that She is eternal, but She does pass by in the respect that for our sakes She appeared subject to time. For it is thus written in the Gospel, *And as they departed from Jericho, the Lord passed by. And, behold, two blind men, sitting by the way side, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, Thou Son of David.* At whose voice, as it is there written, *Jesus stood still*, and restored light. Now what is it to hear passing by, but to restore sight standing still, but that by His manhood He compassionated us, Who by the power of His Godhead banished from us the darkness of our souls? For in that for our sakes He was born and suffered, that He rose again and ascended into heaven, it is as if Jesus passed by, because surely these are doings in time. But He touched and enlightened them standing still, because not as that temporal economy doth likewise the Word's Eternity pass by, Which while remaining in Itself renews all things. For God's standing is His ordering all things mutable by immutable purposing. He, then, Who heard the voices of those imploring Him while 'passing by,' restored light standing still. For though for our sakes He underwent things temporal, yet He bestowed light upon us by the same thing that He knows not to have the passing of mutability. Therefore because when He should through flesh appear to men was an uncertain thing,

John 14, 10. Mat. 20, 29. 30. ver. 32.

Job 28, 25. Myst. it is rightly said now, *God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof.* As though it were expressed in plain words; 'To the thought of man the two are hidden, whether the time when by flesh Wisdom may come to men, or the mode how, even when He appears without, He continues invisible with the Father.

6. Although this may also be understood in another sense. For 'the way thereof' is not inappropriately taken to be that actual thing that comes into the mind, and infuses itself into us in the interior. And 'the place thereof' the heart becomes, coming unto which She abides. Thus of this Her way it is Mat. 3, 3. said, *The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord;* i. e. 'Open in your hearts an entrance Ps. 68, 4. Vulg. to Wisdom at Her coming;' as it is elsewhere said; *Make a way for him, that ascendeth above the setting.* For to 'ascend over the setting,' was by rising again to have got the mastery over that very death, He had undergone. And so he says, *For him, that ascendeth over the setting, make ye a way;* i. e. 'To the Lord on His rising again make a way in your hearts by faith.' Hence it is said to John by Luke 1, 76. the Spirit; *Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare His ways.* For every one that by preaching cleanses the hearts of those that hear him from the defilements of bad habits, prepares a way for Wisdom on Her coming. Thus, this 'Wisdom' hath 'a way,' and hath 'a place;' 'a way' whereby She comes, 'a place' wherein She abides; as She John 14, 23. Herself saith; *If any man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him.* So then there is 'a way' by which She comes, 'a place' wherein She abideth. But whereunto does She come, Who is every where? Is it for Wisdom to come, by the enlightening of our mind to make the presence of Her mightiness to appear? And because it is doubtful to men both into what person's heart She comes, or in what man, after She has come, She rests in abiding there, it is rightly said now, *God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof.* Because it appertains to the Divine sight alone to see, whether by what methods the perception of Wisdom may come to the heart of man, or whose soul shall not lose by deadly imaginations the understanding

of life, which it has been vouchsafed. And because this same 'Wisdom' made manifest by the graciousness of the Manhood was destined in all the regions of the world to fill to the full the hearts of the Elect, it is rightly added;

Ver. 14. *For he regardeth the ends of the earth, and seeth all things that are under the heaven.*

iv. 7. For God's 'regarding' is the renewing to His grace the things that were lost and undone; whence it is written, *A King that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with His eyes.* For by regarding He restrained the evils of our lightness, and bestowed great worth of maturedness. Whence it is further added;

Prov. 20, 8.

Who made the weight for the winds.

v. 8. For in the Holy Scripture, by the rapidity and subtlety of the winds souls are used to be denoted, as it is spoken by the Psalmist of God; *Who walketh above the wings of the winds;* i. e. 'Who passes above the virtues of souls.' Accordingly 'He made the weight for the winds,' in that whilst Wisdom from above fills souls, it renders them weighty with imparted maturity, not with that weightiness, of which it is said, *Ye children of men, how long with a heavy heart.* For it is one thing to be weighty in respect of counsel, and another in respect of sin; it is one thing to be weighty, by constancy, another to be weighty by offence. For this latter weightiness has weight of burthen, the other weight of merit. Thus, therefore, souls receive weight, that they should not henceforth with light motion glance off from their aim at God, but be made to settle into Him with immoveable weightiness of constancy. Still was that people lightly moved to and fro, of which it is said by the Prophet, *And he went on frowardly in the way of his own heart. I have seen his ways: and I let him go.* But weighty counsel in heart banishes all inconstancy of wandering. And because there are souls, that with light motion are now after one set of objects, now after another, Almighty God, because these very light waverings of men's minds He does not estimate lightly, by abandoning passes judgment on the wandering of the heart. But when through grace He regards the wandering mind, He fixes it into stedfastness of counsel. And so it is rightly said now, *And made weight for the winds;*

Ps. 104, 3. Vulg.

Ps. 4, 2.

Is. 57, 17. 18.

Job 28, 25. Myst. because the light motions of the mind, when He deigns to regard with mercifulness, He directly fashions that mind to maturedness of constancy. Or otherwise to ' make weight for the winds,' is to qualify with intermixed infirmity the glory resulting from virtuous achievements, which is vouchsafed to the Elect here. Whence it is also subjoined;

And he weigheth the waters by measure.

vi. 9. ' Waters' in Holy Scripture are wont sometimes to denote the Holy Spirit, sometimes sacred knowledge, sometimes wrong knowledge, sometimes calamity, sometimes drifting peoples, sometimes the minds of those following the faith. Thus by water we have the Inpouring of the Holy John 7, 38. 39. Spirit represented, as when it is said in the Gospel, *He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* Where the Evangelist following on added; *But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive.* Again, by water Ecclus. 15, 3. sacred knowledge is denoted, as it is said; *And give him the water of wisdom to drink.* By water likewise bad knowledge is wont to be designated, as when the woman in Solomon, who bears a type of heresy, charms with crafty Prov. 9, 17. persuasion, saying, *Stolen waters are sweet.* By the term of waters too tribulation are used to be signified, as it is said Ps. 69, 1. by the Psalmist, *Save me, O God, for the waters are come in even unto my soul.* By water peoples are denoted, as it Rev. 17, 15. is said by John, *Now the waters are peoples.* By water likewise not only the tide of peoples drifting away, but also the minds of good men that follow the preachings of faith, Is. 32, 20. are denoted, as the Prophet saith, *Blessed are ye that sow upon all waters.* And it is said by the Psalmist; *The voice* Ps. 29, 3. *of the Lord is upon the waters.* In this place, then, what is denoted by the title of ' waters,' saving the hearts of the Elect, which by the understanding of Wisdom, have now received the hearing of the heavenly voice? Touching whom it is rightly said; *And weigheth the waters by measure.* Because the very Saints, who by the Holy Spirit bearing them up are transported on high, so long as they are in this life, that they may not swell high with any self-elation, are kept down by certain temptations, that they may never have the power to advance as much as they have the wish, but lest they should

be exalted by pride, there takes place in them a kind of measure of their very virtues.

10. It is hence that Elijah, after that by so many achievements he had advanced on high, was suspended aloft by a kind of measure, when he afterwards fled from Jezebel, though a queen, yet only a weak woman. For I consider with myself that this man of marvellous power drew down fire from heaven, and once and again by momentary beseeching consumed the captains of fifty with all their men, by a word shut up the heavens from rain, by a word opened the heavens to rain, raising the dead, foreseeing the several things to come, and, lo, again it occurs to mind, with what dismay he fled before a single weak woman. I see the man, as being stricken with fear, from the hand of God seeking death, yet not obtaining it, from the hand of a woman shunning death by taking to flight. For he sought death, whilst he fled, saying, *It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.* Whence then was he so powerful as to perform those so numerous miracles? whence so weak as to be dismayed at a woman, except that 'the waters are weighed with measure;' that the very Saints of God should at once prevail greatly through the power of God, and again be limited by a kind of measure through their own infirmity. In those powers Elijah learnt what he had received from God, in these weaknesses what he had power to be by himself. That mightiness was power, this weakness the keeper of power. In these powers he shewed what he had received, in these weaknesses that which he had received he kept safe. In the miracles Elijah was to be brought out to view, in the weaknesses he was to be preserved secure.

1 Kings 19, 4.

11. In the same way I see that Paul, encountering the perils of rivers and robbers, of the city and the wilderness, of sea and land, bridling the body by fasts and watchings, undergoing the ills of cold and nakedness, exercising himself watchfully and with pastoral care to the safe-keeping of the Churches, being caught up into the third heaven, and again caught up into Paradise, at once heard secret words which it is not permitted to man to utter, and yet is given over to an angel of Satan to be tempted; he prays that he might be released, and is not

2 Cor. 11, 26.

Job 28, 25. Myst. heard. And when I look to the mere beginnings of his conversion, I consider with myself that heavenly pity opens the heavens to him, and Jesus shews Himself to him from on high. He that lost the light of the body for a time, received the light of the heart for evermore. He is sent Acts 9, 15. to Ananias, he is called *A chosen vessel*, and yet from that same city, which he had entered after the vision of Jesus, he departs in flight, as he himself bears witness, saying, 2 Cor. 11, 32, 33. *In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept guard over the city of the Damascenes, desirous to apprehend me; and through a window, in a basket, was I let down by the wall, and so escaped his hands.* Unto whom I will take leave to say, 'O Paul, already seest thou Jesus in heaven, and still dost thou fly man on earth? Art thou carried into Paradise, art thou made acquainted with secret words of God, and still art thou tempted by a messenger of Satan? Whence so strong, that thou art caught up to heavenly places, whence so weak that thou fliest from man on the earth, and still sufferest hard handling from a messenger of Satan, saving that the Same, Who lifts thee on high, again limits thee with the minutest measuring, that both in thy miracles thou shouldest preach to us the power of God, and again in thy fear cause us to remember our own infirmity?' Which same infirmity, however, that it may not draw us on into despair when it buffets us, whilst thou wert beseeching God touching thine infirmity, because thou wert not heard, to us also thou hast told what thou didst hear; 2 Cor. 12, 9. *My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness.*

12. Thus by the plain voice of God it is shewn that the guardian of power is frailty. For we are then kept to good effect within, when by God's appointment we are tempted to a bearable degree without, sometimes by bad propensities, sometimes by pressing misfortunes. For to these likewise, whom we know to have been men of mighty virtues, there were not wanting temptations and conflicts from the vices. Hence it is that for our encouragement the same great Preacher condescends to bring to view things of that kind Rom. 7, 23. concerning his own case, saying, *I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing*

me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. For the flesh forces down below, that the Spirit may not uplift, and the Spirit draws up on high, that the flesh may not bring to the ground. The Spirit lifts up, that we may not lie grovelling in the lower world, the flesh weighs down, that we should not be lifted up on account of the things on high. If the flesh tempted us, while the Spirit did not uplift us, too surely by the absoluteness of its tempting it would cast us down below. But again, if the Spirit lifted us above, while the flesh did not tempt, It would by that very uplifting prostrate us the worse in the fall of pride. But by a certain regulating method it takes place, that whilst each one of the Saints is already indeed transported on high inwardly, but is still tempted outwardly, he neither incurs the downfall of desperation, nor of self-exaltation; seeing that neither does outward temptation bring transgression to its accomplishment, because the interior bent draws upwards; nor again does this interior bent lift up into pride, because the exterior temptation abases whilst it weighs down. Thus by a high appointment we see in the interior advancement what we receive, in the exterior shortcoming what we are, and by a strange method it is brought to pass that a man should neither be lifted up on the ground of virtue, nor despair on the ground of temptation, because while the Spirit draws, and the flesh draws back, by the exactest regulating of the Interior Judgment, the soul is balanced in a kind of mean above the things below, and below the things above. Therefore it is well said, BOOK XIX.

Ver. 26, 27. *When He made a decree for the rain, and a way for the sounding tempests, then did He see it and declare it; He prepared it, yea, and searched it out.*

13. By 'rain' the sayings of those that preach are used to be denoted. Whence it is said by Moses; *Let my doctrine be waited for as the rain;* whose words, that is to say, when they gently persuade are 'rain,' but when they thunder out terrible things touching the Judgment to come, they are 'sounding tempests.' And it deserves to be noted, that 'a decree is made for the rain,' in order that 'a way may be opened for the sounding tempests.' For a decree has been set to the preachers themselves, that by living they fulfil what by vii. Deut. 32, 2.

Job 28, 26. 27. Myst. uttering they are forward to recommend. For the authoritativeness of speaking is lost, when the voice is not supported by the practice. For here it is said by the Psalmist,

Ps. 50, 16. 17. *But unto the wicked God saith; What hast thou to do to declare My statutes, or that thou shouldest take My covenant in thy mouth? seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest My words behind thee.* For the words of God the preacher does cast behind himself, when the same that he says he thinks scorn to do. But when may another obey his sayings, whilst he himself rejects in practice what he preaches with the voice, and shews not to hear that he tells? Of this law of

Mat. 5, 19. preaching it is written; *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoso shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.* 'The kingdom of heaven,' we see, He calls the present Church; concerning which it is written,

Mat. 13, 41. *And they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend.* For in the Kingdom Above 'offences' that should have to be gathered out thereof do not take place. He then that breaks in practice, and teaches the like in words, in this kingdom of heaven shall be the least, in the other not even the least. Now 'He set a way to the sounding tempests,' when for His preachers He made access to the hearts of men stricken with dread of the Judgment to come. So first 'a law is set,' that afterwards 'a way may be opened,' because that voice pierceth the heart of him that heareth, which maintains by practice the thing that it has sounded with the lips. Now it was then when 'He set a law to the showers, and a way to the sounding tempests,' that God 'saw, declared, prepared, and searched' this 'Wisdom.' By a mode of speech customary to Holy Writ, for God to see is a phrase for causing

Gen. 22, 12. us to see, as the Lord saith to the righteous man, *Now I know that thou fearest God.* And the Israelites are forewarned;

Deut. 13, 3. *The Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God*, i. e. 'that He may make you to know.' At that time, then, when 'He set a law to the showers,' i. e. gave the precept of watching to the preachers, this 'Wisdom' made Incarnate He caused to be 'seen and declared' by the preachers, to be 'prepared and searched' by the hearers.

Since he 'prepares' Her for himself, whosoever by living aright is procuring Her favourable against the Day of Judgment. And observe that there are four particulars spoken respecting her. For he says, *He did see it and declare it, He prepared it, yea, He searched it.* Thus He 'saw,' in that She is 'a Likeness;' He 'declared it,' in that She is 'the Word;' 'prepared it,' in that She is a remedy; and 'searched it,' in that She is a thing hidden from sight. But this, viz. that the Eternal Wisdom of God is 'the Likeness' and 'the Word' of the Father, when is it penetrated by the mind of man? For who might understand either a Word apart from time, or a Likeness apart from limiting. Therefore there was need for something to be said, which man might recognise concerning Her by himself; whence it is fitly subjoined;

Ver. 28. *And unto man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.*

viii. 14. As though it were spoken in plain speech; 'Man, turn back to thine own self; sift thoroughly the secrets of thine own heart. If thou findest out that thou dost fear God, surely it is plain that of this Wisdom thou art full. Which same if thou art not able to learn what in herself She is, meanwhile thou henceforth findest what She is in thyself. For She that is feared in herself by the Angels, in thee is called 'the fear of the Lord.' Because it is certain that thou possessest Her, if it is not uncertain that thou dost fear God.' Hence also it is said by the Psalmist; *The beginning of* Ps. 111, *Wisdom is the fear of the Lord*, because She then begins to 10. penetrate the heart, when She disturbs it by the dread of the final Judgment. Therefore the Word of God draws Itself in to our littleness; just as a father, when he speaks to his little child, in order that he may be able to be understood by him, talks stammeringly of his own accord. For because we are unable to penetrate the nature of Wisdom, what She is in herself, by the condescension of God we have heard what She is in us, when it is said, *Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom.* But because he really understands the force of Divine fear, who keeps himself from all bad practices, it is rightly subjoined; *And to depart from evil is understanding.*

Job 29, 1. Myst. So then[a] the things that come after, that they are full of the spirit of prophecy, the words of the sacred history themselves bear testimony, whereas it is said,

C. xxix. 1. *Moreover Job continued his parable, and said.*

ix. 15. For because a parable is a name for a likeness, it plainly appears that through a form of exterior words he speaks mysteries, who with reference to speaking is recorded Allego. to have 'taken up a parable.' For when he relates his own circumstances, he is telling all the things that are to come to Holy Church, and through the thing that he himself undergoes he points out what she should undergo. But sometimes he so mixes the words of his own history, that he sounds not of any thing allegorical, while sometimes he so utters his own sorrows as though he were giving utterance in the voice of the sorrowing Church. But in the last part of his discourse, he designates the last time of the Church, when her adversaries, i. e. carnal persons, or heretics and pagans, whom she now busies herself to repress by the authority of wisdom, being set up with unbridled boastfulness, she is obliged to put up with, while derided. Whence in this discourse Job 30, 1. likewise it is said; *But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to put with the dogs of my flock.* And the very principle of the arrangement requires that by the last words of blessed Job, the last days of Holy Church should be denoted, when, persecution increasing, she is forced to bear the undisguised voices of heretics, when those motions of their hearts, which they now cover up within the depths of their thoughts, they then disclose in the utterance of error made manifest. For now, as it is said by John, the dragon is imprisoned and held Rev. 20, 3. fast in the *bottomless pit*, because the wickedness of the devil is hidden from sight in their crafty hearts. But, as is there said, the dragon shall be brought forth out of the bottomless pit, because whatsoever is now covered over from fear, then against the Church openly out of the hearts of the wicked is all that serpent's venom brought to light. For now the envenomed feeling hides itself from sight under a flattering tongue, and

[a] The inference is not obvious. It seems to be this: that Job declares these things to be 'Wisdom,' because he is going to speak of them in himself as Her type.

malevolence of craft as it were covers itself with a kind of bottomless pit of dissembling. Now the Lord, as it is expressed by the voice of the Psalmist, *gathereth the waters of the sea as in a skin.* For the 'skin' is carnal thinking. So 'the waters of the sea are gathered in a skin,' when the bitterness of a froward mind does not burst forth outwardly into the voice of unhallowed liberty. Surely the time shall come, when the froward and the carnal speak forth against her with unreserved voice that which they now go about with secret thought. The time shall come when they shall oppress the Catholic Church not only with unjust words, but with cruel wounds. BOOK XIX. Ps.33,7.

16. For from her adversaries the Church suffers persecution in two ways, viz. either by words or by swords. Now when she bears persecution by words, her wisdom is put in exercise, when by swords, her patience. Now persecutions of words we do now too as well daily undergo at the hands of heretics, when heretics themselves flatter us with crafty tongues and with feigned humility, but the persecutions of swords are destined to follow towards the end of the world, that the grains to be stored up in the heavenly granaries may be the more genuinely cleared of the chaff of sins, the more straitly they are bruised with affliction. Then all the Elect, that may be caught in that tribulation, call to mind these times when now the Church secures the peace of the faith, when she holds under the proud necks of heretics, not by the potency of her highness, but by the yoke of reason. They call to mind ourselves, who are passing quiet times of faith, who, though we be straitened in the wars[b] of the nations, yet are not driven to extremity in the sayings of Fathers. Thus blessed Job bearing a type of Holy Church, which is then found in these straits, and yet remembers herself of our tranquillity, as I said, describes the particulars of himself past, and tells the particulars destined to come to others, saying;

Ver. 2. *Who would give me that I might be as in the months past?*

17. For Holy Church being borne down with sorrows is to say many like things. For it shall be for her to be besieged X.

[b] Alluding to the hostilities of the Lombards especially.

Job 29, 3. ALLEG. with such great tribulations, as with great sighing to long for these times, which we undergo with great sorrow. So then let her say, let her say in the voice of blessed Job, *Who would give me that I might be as in the months past?* For because an appointed number of days has the name of 'months,' what else does he signify by the title of months, but the gatherings of souls? For days, while they are gathered in months, are removed away, because in this time as well Holy Church, while she gathers in souls shining bright with the light of truth, hides them in the interior depths. Sometimes also a month is put for perfection, as Is. 66, 23. when the Prophet says, *It shall be a month from a month;* i. e. perfection in rest to those, to whom there may now be perfection in practice. So let her remember her perfection of old, let her bring back to mind with what preaching of hers, by souls gathered in, she carried off her gains, and being straitened by tribulations, let her say, *Who would give me that I might be as in the months of old?* In which same months, who and what he was, he subjoins in telling over, saying;

Ver. 3. *As in the days when God preserved me; when His lamp shined upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness.*

xi. 18. For then, persecution forcing thereto, she sees multitudes of the frail fall from her, whom now as a mother she cherishes as her little ones within the bosom of peace, and keeps close within the quiet cradles of faith, seeing that being mixed with the strong they are nurtured by the very tranquillity of the faith. But then many such are destined to fall, and through the bowels of charity, whatever it sustains in the damage of the little ones, the mind of the perfect laments that itself undergoes. For every damage of the weak is by compassion made to pass to the hearts of the 2 Cor. 11, 29. strong. Whence it is said by Paul, *Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?* For a man is perfect in such proportion as he perfectly feels the sorrows of others. Whence Holy Church, being brought to a pass by the weak ones falling at that time, shall say with right, *As in the days when God preserved me;* because herself she then accounts to fall in those, who now sees herself in these

to be kept safe. And it is well said, *When His lamp shined upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness.* For by the term of a 'lamp' the light of Holy Scripture is represented, whereof the Shepherd of the Church himself saith, *We have also the word of prophecy more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts.* And the Psalmist saith, *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.* Now because our topmost part is the mind, the mind is rightly styled by the designation of 'head.' Whence it is said by the Psalmist, *Thou hast anointed my head with oil.* As if he said in plain terms, 'Thou hast filled my soul with the fatness of charity.' And so now 'the lamp shines upon the head' of the Church, because the sacred Oracles enlighten the darkness of our minds, that in this darksome place of the present life, whilst we receive the light of the word of God, we should see what things are to be done. Now she 'walks by His light in darkness,' because the Holy Church Universal, though it penetrate not the secrets of another's thought, because as it were it does not know the face in the night, yet it sets the steps of good practice, being governed by the light of Heavenly Revelation. It goes on; Book XIX. 2 Pet. 1, 19. Ps. 119, 105. Ps. 23, 5.

Ver. 4. *As I was in the days of my youth, when God was secretly in my tabernacle.*

19. As of each individual man, so is the age of Holy Church described. For she was a little one, when fresh from the birth she was unable to preach the Word of Life. Hence it is said of her, *My sister is a little one, and she hath no breasts;* in this way, that Holy Church, before she made progress by accessions of virtue, was not able to yield the teats of preaching to the weak ones her hearers. But the Church is called 'adult' when being wedded to the Word of God, filled with the Holy Spirit, by the office of preaching she is with young in the conception of children, with whom by exhorting she travails, whom by converting she brings forth. Of this age of hers it is said to the Lord; *The young maidens have loved Thee.* For all the Churches, which constitute one Catholic Church, are called *young maidens*, not now aged by sin, but young ones by grace, not xii. Cant. 8, 8. Cant. 1, 3.

Jos 29, 4. ALLEG. barren by old age, but by the age of the soul fitted for spiritual fruitfulness. Accordingly then, when in those days being as it were enfeebled by a kind of old age she hath not strength to bring forth children by preaching, she calls to mind the bygone fruitfulness, saying, *As I was in the days of my youth.* Though after those days wherein she is borne down, yet, this notwithstanding, now at length towards the actual end of times, she is empowered with a mighty efficacy of preaching. For the Gentiles being taken in to the full, all the Israelitish people that shall then be found she draws into the bosom of the faith. Since it is written; *Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved.* But before those times there shall be days, in the which she shall appear for a little while borne down by her adversaries, when too she remembers these days, saying, *As I was in the days of my youth; when God was secretly in my tabernacle.*

Rom. 11, 25. 26.

20. What in this place do we take the 'tabernacle' for but the dwelling-place of the mind? Because by all that we do with taking thought, we dwell in the counsel of our heart. But whoever in silence thinks of the precepts of God, to him 'God is secretly in his tabernacle.' For he had seen the dwelling-place of his heart to be before the eyes of God, who said, *And the meditation of my heart always in Thy sight.* For outward deeds are open to the eyes of men, but widely and incomparably more our interior and minutest thoughts are open to the eyes of God. *For*, as it is written, *all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him.* And oftentimes in the outward deed we are afraid to appear disordered before the eyes of men, and in the interior thought are not afraid of the regard of Him, Whom, whilst He sees all things, we see not. For we are much more discernible by God within than we are by men without. And hence all the Saints scan themselves both within and without on every side, and are in fear of either shewing themselves blameworthy outwardly, or wicked inwardly to the invisible seeing. It is hence that the living creatures, which are seen by the Prophet, are recorded to be 'full of eyes round about and within.' For he that orders his outward circumstances respectably, but disregards the inward, has eyes 'round about'

Ps. 19, 14.

Ez.1,18. & 10,12. Rev. 4, 6. & 8.

but not 'within.' But all the Saints, because they at once scan their exterior ways round and round that they may furnish good examples in themselves to their brethren, and watchfully mark their interior ways, because they are providing themselves irreproachable for the regarding eye of the Interior Judge, are described as having eyes both 'round about and within;' and that they may please God, even more do they make themselves complete within their interior self, as it is said by the Psalmist as well of Holy Church, *All the glory of her, the king's daughter, is from within.* But because she keeps her outward things also irreproachable, he added with justice concerning her; *Clothed about in clothing of wrought gold with embroidery.* That she should be at once beautiful to herself 'within,' and to others 'without,' both advancing herself by interior glory, and instructing others by the outward examples of deeds. Thus then let blessed Job say in himself, yea, let him say in the person of the Church Universal, *When God was secretly in my tabernacle.* For that he may make it evident how much he had advanced within, he tells, that 'God was secretly in his tabernacle.' That he may also shew the deeds of righteousness to what extent he outwardly kept them, he adds;

Ps. 45, 13.

Ver. 5. *When the Almighty was yet with me; and when my servants were about me.*

21. Now all that stand in awe of the divine precepts become God's 'tabernacle.' Hence as we have already said above, 'Truth' saith by Himself of the man that keeps His commandments, *I and My Father will come and make Our abode with him.* Contrariwise the wicked severally, whereas they do not aim at the things within, pour themselves forth without in the thoughts of their hearts. Whence it is said to them by the Prophet, *Turn back to the heart within, O ye transgressors.* And again, *Woe to you that devise a vain thing.* Since in their actions they are afraid of men, whom they see with bodily sight, and God, Whom they do not see, they do not account to be present to them. Contrary whereunto it is said in commendation of a righteous person, seeing that he disregarded the king of Egypt, and obeyed the commandments of God, *For he endured, as seeing Him Who is invisible.* For the wicked ruler of the earth he as it were

xiii.

John 14, 23.

Is. 46, 8.

Mic. 2, 1.

Heb. 11, 27.

Job 29, 6. saw not, in that he banished him from the eyes of the heart. But the King Invisible 'as seeing,' 'he endured,' because from the regarding of His fear he turned not aside the eye of the soul. So Holy Church being taken then in great tribulations, when she sees many by evil imagining depart from God, surely she sees the tabernacle of their mind on God's departing to remain empty, and justly lamenting, she says, *When God was secretly in my tabernacle.* By which words, and not inappropriately, the feigning of religion is likewise bewailed, because there are those even now that aim not to be, but to seem Christians. These without question have God in public, not 'in secret.' But Holy Church desires to have God 'in secret,' because He regards those really faithful ones, whom He knows to be holding on to the life of faith with complete affection. Which same, as well also with reference to the external uprightness of her activity, saith, *When the Almighty was yet with me: when my servants were about me.* 'Servants' surely those are called, who do the bidding of the heavenly precepts. Whence the Lord saith by the Prophet, *Behold I, and my servants which the Lord hath given me.* And again in the Gospel, *Servants*[a], *have ye any meat?* And so now 'the servants are round about her,' because in all nations almost there are found those that keep the commandments of heaven, and obey the rules of spiritual discipline. Which servants, too truly, shall then be lacking to do her service, when the wicked doers, that shall be found, despise her spiritual precepts. It goes on;

ALLEG.

Is. 8, 18.

John 21, 5.

Ver. 6. *When I washed my feet with butter.*

xiv. 22. Whereas we have already frequently said that Christ and the Church are one person, He, that is to say, the Head of that Body, and She the Body of that Head; these words are to be understood after the voice of the Head in one way, after the voice of the Body in another way. Whom then do we take for 'the feet' of the Lord, but the holy Preachers. Of whom He saith, *And I will walk in them.* Thus 'the feet are washed with butter,' because the holy Preachers are filled to the full with the fatness of good works. For, as we have already said above, scarcely is the mere preaching itself carried on without something being done wrong. For

Lev. 26, 12.

[a] *Pueri* Vulg. The Greek diminutive hardly bears this.

any man preaching is either drawn on into some slight indignation, if he is despised, or into some little glorying, if he is reverenced by those that hear him. Whence the Apostles too had their feet washed, that from any slight defilement contracted in the act of preaching itself they might be cleansed as from a sort of dust collected by a journey. And blessed James saith, *My brethren, be not many masters.* Jam. 3, 1. 2. And a little after, *For in many things we offend all.* Thus 'the feet are washed with butter,' because the dust gathered by glory in preaching is steeped and cleansed by the fatness of good works. Or otherwise 'the feet are washed with butter,' when the wages owing are paid to the holy Preachers by those that hear, and those whom the imposed labour of preaching exhausts, the richness of good practice exhibited by the disciples cheers; not that they preach for this that they may be fed, but that they are therefore fed, that they may preach; i. e. that they may hold up to preach; not so that the action of the preacher should pass into the aim of getting support, but that the ministering of support should be made subservient to the usefulness of preaching. Whence by good preachers it is not for the sake of the means of living that preaching is rendered, but for the sake of preaching that the means of living are accepted. And as often as what is wanted is bestowed on those that preach by those that hear them, they are not used to take delight in the benefit of the good things, but in the reward of those bestowing them. Whence it is said by Paul, *Not because I desire a gift, but I desire fruit.* For Phil. 4, 17. the 'gift' is the actual thing that is bestowed; but the fruit thereof is if with a kindly disposition a thing be bestowed in the pursuit of the future recompense. So we receive the gift in the thing, the fruit thereof in the heart. And because the Apostle was fed rather by the recompense of his disciples than by the benefaction, he avouches that he 'seeks not a gift,' but 'fruit.' Hence he straightway added, saying, *But I have all and abound.* Therefore 'the feet are washed with butter,' when the holy preachers, as we said, worn out by the actual preaching itself, are regaled with the good deeds of their hearers. For the weary 'feet' he had 'anointed with butter,' who heard, *Because the bowels of the Saints are* Philem. 7.

Job 29, 6. Allegg. 2 Tim. 1, 16.

refreshed by the brother. With this 'butter the foot was anointed,' which was held fast in fetters, saying, *The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus: for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain.* So then if by the voice of the Head we form our estimate of the words, we do rightly as has been said in taking 'the feet' for preachers.

23. But if we are to interpret these words in the voice of the Body alone, then the feet of the Church are the ministers of inferior works, which whilst they enforce the things that are without for necessary purposes, by the lowest ministration stick to the ground like feet. But they that are at the head, who are intent on the pursuit of instruction, ought with heedful care to question the hearts of the busied, and by the voice of frequent admonition to administer to them that pouring in of richness which they themselves as disengaged receive. For because in one body the members are interested for one another reciprocally, just as our outermost parts are stayed up by their ministrations, so it is necessary that their interior parts should be filled by our pursuits. When then to persons devoted to the extremest offices the holy doctors preach the anointing oil of our Lord's Incarnation, they 'wash the feet with the butter' of utterance. Moreover the feet are accustomed to be lacerated by the mere ruggedness of the way; whence it is altogether difficult at once to go a journey in the earthly actions of this life, and not sustain any wounds at all from the exertion of the journey. And so when the rulers keeping watch call back to their heart within their hearers engrossed with exterior concerns, that they may ascertain what evil things they have committed amidst the very deeds allowed to be done, and that what they find out they may bewail, 'they wash the feet with butter;' because to the wounds of these persons they administer the ointments of penitence. Therefore let Holy Church being unspeakably afflicted remember how in the time of her peace she purified by the word of exhortation even the furthest members in herself, and let her say, *When I washed my feet with butter.*

Hist. Which it is wonderfully interesting to view in the case of blessed Job, who amidst so many cares of property, so many interests for children, so many engagements of sacrifices, preached to his dependents, howsoever the very farthest,

the good things of the life ensuing, that those he might inoculate touching heavenly things, who were working for him at earthly services. What do we Bishops say to all this, who to those committed to us care not to render the word of life, when a wedded husband, neither the secular garb, nor the management of large means were able to debar the office of preaching. But saving the historical verity, let us now return to the words of Holy Church, who tells by blessed Job, i. e. by the mouth of a Member of her own, how great are the things that she shall suffer in the last time, when she remembers her past fortunes, when by that same richness of the word the life of those in action was cleansed. Who in more fully following out that same watchfulness of her preachers adds; BOOK XIX. ALLEG.

And the rock poured me out rivers of oil.

24. That by the title of a rock Christ is denoted, the great Preacher avouches, saying, *And that rock was Christ.* Which very 'rock' doth now 'pour out rivers of oil' for the use of Holy Church, because the Lord by speaking therein gives out the preachings of the interior anointing. 'From this Rock that river of oil issued forth,' the book of Matthew, the book of Mark, the book of Luke, and the book of John. In the several regions of this world for all the preachings she put forth, this 'Rock poured out' as many 'rivers of oil' by the mouths of the Apostles. As many times still 'a river of oil is poured out from this Rock,' as often as to the minds of the hearers, to be anointed by the Holy Spirit, those things are explained which are spoken concerning Christ in the old Books. And they are called 'rivers of oil,' because they run out and anoint; in which same he that is dipped is anointed, and he that is anointed is fattened within. Of which fatness doubtless it is that the Psalmist saith, *Let my soul be filled as with marrow and fatness.* It may be that by the designation of oil the actual anointing of the Holy Spirit is denoted, whereof it is said by the Prophet; *And the yoke shall rot at the presence of the oil.* For 'the yoke doth rot at the presence of the oil,' because whilst we are anointed with the grace of the Holy Spirit, we are set free from the bondage of our captivity; and whereas the proud dominion of the evil spirit is thrown off, the yoke is broken in pieces, wherewith the XV. 1 Cor. 10, 4. Ps. 63, 5. Is. 10, 27.

Job 28, 7—10. ALLEG. Is. 5, 1. necks of our liberty were borne down. Of this oil again it is written; *A vineyard was made to my beloved on the horn, a child of oil.* For 'a child of oil,' the faithful people is called, which is engendered to the faith of God by the interior anointing of the Holy Spirit. And so at that time let Holy Church, being borne down by countless sorrows, recal to remembrance the gifts of the Spirit and the marvellous preachings which are her's now, and let her bewail her own silence, saying, *The rock poured me out rivers of oil.* To which words he fitly subjoins;

Ver. 7—10. *When I went out to the gate of the city, and in the street they prepared me a chair? The young men saw me and hid themselves, and the old men rose up and stood. The princes ceased to speak, and laid the finger on the mouth. The rulers held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to their mouth.*

xvi. 25. It was the custom of the ancients, that the elders should sit together in the gates, and judge the cases of those entering in, that so the people of the city might be the more peaceful, in proportion as it was not allowed to those at variance to enter in. Now we in revering the sacred history hold it certain that all this blessed Job did for the sake of the observance of just dealing, and we are led to the investigating the mysteries of the allegory. What then is denoted by 'the gate of the city' saving every good action, by which the soul enters in to the company of the heavenly Kingdom? Hence the Prophet saith; *Thou, that liftest me up from the gates of death, that I may declare all Thy praises in the gates of the daughter of Sion.* For 'the gates of death' are bad actions, which drag to destruction; but because 'Sion' is the word for 'a viewing,' 'the gates of Sion' we interpret good actions, by which we enter into the Country Above, that we may view the glory of our King. But what is denoted by the seat but the authority of mastership. Now 'a street' in the Greek tongue is equivalent to 'breadth.' And so now Holy Church goes forth to the gate of the city, because that she may obtain access to the heavenly country, she puts herself out in holy actions. For whom there is 'a seat prepared in the street,' because in the breadth of high authority she displays the freedom of her mastership. For

Ps. 9, 13. 14.

she that proclaims with public announcement the right things she has a perception of as it were ‘ sits in the street on the seat,’ in that she fears no one for her preaching, and oppressed by alarms for no man buries herself under silence. Does not she in public sit in command to teach, whom at one and the same time truth in perceiving and power in teaching bear up? But whilst he ‘ went forth to the gate, and sat in the street on the seat,’ what was done by the light-minded, what by the grave, he adds, saying; Book XIX.

Ver. 8. *The young men saw me and hid themselves, and the old men rose up and stood.*

26. If we give heed to the history, the things that he said we believe, if to the allegory, we see the things that he foretold; for those use to be called ‘ young men’ who are not burdened with any weightiness of counsels. But Holy Scripture is used to call those ‘ elders,’ not who are ripe by amount of years alone, but by ancientness of character. Hence it was said by one that was wise; *For venerable old age is not that of long time, nor counted by the number of years; but the understanding of a man is grey hairs, and a spotless life is old age.* Whence the Lord also rightly saith to Moses; *Gather unto Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest that they are elders of the people.* In whom what else is required saving the old age of the heart, when such sort of persons are bidden to be chosen who are known to be elders? For if it were the old age of the body that were sought for in them, they might have been known by as many as they might have been seen by. But whereas it is said, *whom thou knowest that they are elders of the people;* doubtless it is clear that the old age of the mind and not of the body is told as fit to be chosen. Thus now ‘ the young men see Holy Church, and hide themselves, and the old men rise up and stand,’ because her activity and uprightness the immature are afraid of, the aged magnify. They that are light of mind flee, but the grave and perfect do homage to her by rising up to the merits of her life. Since the discipline thereof the perfect sort love, the imperfect ones blame. And so ‘ the young men see her and hide themselves,’ because they are afraid to be detected in their hidden courses of conduct. But ‘ the elders rise up xvii. Wisd. 4, 8. 9. Numb. 11, 16.

Job 29, 9. 10. Allegor. and stand,' because all the perfect make it appear by humility how much they have gained ground in good practice. But because he describes all this of his own people, let him describe as well how he is feared by foreign people.

Ver. 9, 10. *The princes ceased to speak, and laid the finger on the mouth. The rulers held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to their throat.*

xviii. 27. Who else in this place can be understood as leaders or princes, but the framers of heretical evil? Concerning whom Ps. 107, 40. it is said by the Psalmist, *Strife was poured out upon their princes, and they led them aside in the pathless place, and not in the way.* For these identical persons, while they are not afraid to interpret the dispensation of God in a wrong sense, assuredly draw the common herds subject to them not into that way which is 'Christ,' but into 'a pathless place:' over whom 'strife also is rightly said to be poured out,' because by their statements they contradict mutually themselves. For Arius in receiving three Persons in the Divine Nature believed three Gods as well. Contrary to whom Sabellius taking up one God believed there was one Person. Between whom Holy Church unswervingly holding the right pathway of her preaching both in proclaiming one God, asserts against Sabellius three Persons, and in asserting three Persons, confesses against Arius one God. Again, because in sacred Revelation Manichæus found virginity to be commended, he condemned marriage. But on the other hand Jovinian, because he knew marriages to be allowed, despised the pureness of virginity. Whence it takes place that, heretics being always at cross purposes by a wrong apprehension, reciprocally their wickedness is at once in accordance with itself in sin, and at variance with itself in opinion. But on the other hand Holy Church midway between the disputes of either side moves with composed peace, and knows so to receive the higher good, that she also knows to venerate[a] the lower, so that she should neither equal the highest to the lowest, nor again despise the lowest whilst she venerates the highest. And so now the rulers of heretical multitudes considering well the authority of Holy

[a] He probably uses this strong word on account of the *sanctity* of marriage.

Church cease to speak, and as it were 'put the finger on their mouth,' whilst with false complaints they signify that they are restrained not by the reasoning of the voice but by the hand of power. 'The rulers hold their peace,' because those same persons who endeavour to draw after them the people going wrong, that they should not now dare to utter what is wrong, are checked at once by the weight of authority and the efficacy of reason. Whose 'tongue cleaveth to their throat,' because though they dare not to speak what is bad with an unrestrained utterance, yet they inwardly cover up in themselves all the things which they go to work to propound untrue against the true faith; therefore these times, the Church, being seized by the tribulation ensuing, calls to mind and laments, saying, *When I went out to the gate through the city, and when they prepared me a seat in the street; the young men saw me and hid themselves; and the aged arose and stood up; the princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouths. The leaders held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to their throat.* As though she said in plain speech; 'When there was an opportunity given me to preach with a voice publicly raised, every one who was not in subjection to the truth dreaded me.' For at that time, when Holy Church is weighed down by adversity, license of speech is afforded to all the bad preachers severally. Which Jeremiah beholding long while beforehand, saith, *Even the sea-monsters bare the breasts; they give suck to their young ones.* For what else does he designate 'monsters[1]' saving heretics bearing the face indeed of a human being, but the hearts of brute creatures through impiety? Which same then 'bare the breast,' when they freely preach their error. Then they 'give suck to their young' in that the misattached souls of the young ones, while they insinuate therein what is wrong, by nourishing they confirm in impiety. It follows;

Book XIX.

Lam. 4, 3.

[1] lamiæ

Ver. 11. *The ear hearing me, blessed me; and the eye seeing, gave witness to me.*

28. Whereas blessed Job avouches himself to be 'blessed by those that heard him,' and to 'have witness given to him by those that saw him,' what he was in speech and what in practice, we have shewn us. For neither is he henceforth

xix. Hist.

Job 29, 12. 13. Hist. perfect in practice, whom wickedness of the tongue still withstands, or praiseworthy in speech who does not exhibit in practice the thing that he utters. Therefore that blessed Job being found out by the reproaches of his own friends, might declare that he had both these, he shews himself to have been an object of veneration both to the persons hearing and the persons seeing him. Which if we refer to the voice of Holy Church, that man 'blesses her words,' who Allego. completes in practice the things he has heard. That person 'gives testimony to her,' who in patterns of life responds to her by living well. For he in a true sense sees Holy Church, whose life bears witness that he sees her. For to this end the righteousness of the good is seen within her, that all that see her may be corrected of their wickednesses. Not yet, then, does he see the good within the pale of Holy Church, who is not reformed from evil habits. But whence 'the testimony is rendered to him,' is shewn, in that he subjoins;

Ver. 12, 13. *Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I comforted the widow's heart.*

xx. Hist. 29. Great mercifulness these deeds are proofs of, to 'deliver the poor that crieth,' to minister aid to the 'fatherless,' to rescue one on the point to perish, to 'cheer the heart of the widow.' For above it was said what he put forth in respect of instruction. For he says; *The ear hearing blessed me;* but now he relates what he rendered in respect of mercifulness, saying, *Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him.* Since the voice along with the deed of Allego. necessity accords with itself. These things blessed Job both exhibited to those under him, and thus notwithstanding represented them as destined to be exhibited by Holy Church. Who doth now unceasingly enact both one and the other, that is to say, that her children she should at once feed by speaking, and protect by shielding, so that she should at once by words replenish the good, and by her patronage defend them from the evil. Now it Gen. 1, 11. is well written; *Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb*

yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind. Which really and truly happened in such a way, that it was a sign of something really and truly to happen. For by 'the earth' the Church is represented, which both regales us with the provender of the word, and keeps us safe by the shadow of her patronage; which both by speaking feeds and by aiding protects, so that she should not only bring forth the herb of refreshment, but also along with the fruit of the deed, the tree of protection. Book XIX.

30. I see that it also deserves to be well considered by those who head the governments of the common herds, that in saying above, *The young men saw me and hid themselves;* he now affirms, *I comforted the widow's heart.* What great discipline of rule, that before his presence 'the young men' should 'hide themselves!' What great mildness of pitying that by him 'the widows' hearts should be cheered!' For there are some persons so severe that they lose even all gentleness of kindly affection, and there are some so mild, that they part with the rights of strict rule. Whence by all rulers both are with all diligence to be maintained, that neither in the rigorousness of discipline they abandon the loving-kindness of a mild disposition, nor again in gentleness abandon severity of discipline, so that they may neither grow hard to the fellow-feeling of pitifulness, when they chastise the contumacious, nor enervate the strong arm of discipline when they cheer the hearts of the weak. Thus, then, let vigour of discipline control mildness, and mildness adorn vigour, and so let the one be recommended by the other, that neither vigour become hard, nor mildness unstrung. Hist.

31. Now these works of pitifulness, which we have named above, Holy Church at once exhibits corporally, and ceases not to exhibit spiritually. For she 'delivers the poor that crieth,' when to the sinner imploring pardon she remits those sins which he has been guilty of. Since it is of such poor that it is said, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* And the cry of such poor ones is the cry of those saying in the voice of the Psalmist, *Let Thy tender mercy speedily prevent us; for we are made very poor.* Now she 'delivers the fatherless who hath no helper,' in that every one who now flying the desires of a persecuting Alleg. Matt. 5, 3. Ps. 79, 8.

Job 29, 14. Allego. world, his old father the devil being dead, runneth to the bosom of Holy Church, finds therein the help of exhortation. It may be that by the title of 'the fatherless,' any believer may be understood even with reference to the death of a good father, of the sight of whom he is deprived for a while, though not deprived of solace. And 'the blessing' too 'of him that was ready to perish' comes upon her, when she anticipates the destruction of a sinner, and when by holy admonitions Jam. 5, 20. she brings him back from the pit of sin. Whence it is written; *He that converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.* For if it is a thing of great recompense to rescue from death the flesh sooner or later to die, of what high merit is it to free the soul from death, to live without end in the heavenly country? Now 'the heart of the widow' she 'comforteth,' in that to each faithful soul he that describes the recompenses of the Lord, as it were recalls to remembrance the blessings of her husband. Unto Whom as the soul is spiritually united, He being dead, she is called 'a widow,' but is cheered by the declarations of Holy Church in consequence of His Resurrection. Great consolation therefore doth the heart of the widow receive, when the faithful soul learns by the words of the Church somewhat concerning the Coming of Him, to Whom she is spiritually united. It goes on;

Ver. 14. *With righteousness was I clothed, and arrayed myself as with raiment.*

xxi. Hist. Moral. 32. Surely, when we are clothed with a garment, we are surrounded on every side, and so he is 'clothed with righteousness as with a garment,' who defends himself on every side with good practice, and leaves no part of his conduct naked to sin; for he that is just in some deeds and unjust in others, it is as if he covered over this side, and exposed that one naked; nor are those henceforth good deeds, which are defiled by other evil deeds springing up. Eccl. 9, 18. Vulg. For hence it is said by Solomon, *He that offendeth in one thing, shall lose many that are good.* Hence James saith, Jam. 2, 10. *But whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he shall be guilty of all.* Which same sentence of his he himself diligently unfolded, when he

added, *For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.* Book XIX. James 2, 11.

33. And so with the eyes of the heart stretched out roundabouts, watching must be enforced by us on every side. Hence it is rightly said by Solomon also, *Keep thy heart with all watching, for out of it are the issues of life.* Prov. 4, 23. For going to say *watching*, he put first *all*, without question that each one might scan himself diligently on this side and on that side, and as long as he is in this life know that he is set in pitched battle against spiritual enemies, lest the reward which he is making up by one set of actions, he should lose by another set, lest on this side he bar the door against the enemy, but on another side open an entrance. For if against plotting enemies a city be encompassed by a great rampart, be girt with strong walls, on every side defended by a sleepless watch, yet a single opening only be left therein undefended through neglect, from this quarter surely the enemy enters in, who seemed to be every way shut out. For that Pharisee who went up into the Temple to pray, with what fortifying he had begirt the city of his soul, let us hear. *I fast twice in the week*, he says, *I give tithes of all that I possess.* He that set out with *I thank Thee,* Luke 18, 12. did, surely, employ extraordinary defences. But let us see where he left an opening undefended for a plotting enemy; *Because I am not as this publican.* See how he opened the city of his heart to plotting enemies through self-exalting, which city he fruitlessly shut close by fasting and almsgiving. Vainly is all the rest defended, when one spot by which an entrance lies open to the enemy is not defended. He rightly gave thanks, but wrongly exalted himself above the publican. The city of his heart by being lifted up he betrayed, which by living abstemiously, and by giving alms, he guarded. The greedy appetite was subdued by abstinence, the gluttony of the belly was destroyed, a grasping inclination was got the better of, by bountifulness covetousness was kept down. With what great pains do we suppose this to have been done? But, alas! what a series of painful efforts being struck by one bad point fell to the ground! What great excellencies were killed by the sword of one sin! Whence

Job 29, 14. Hist. Moral. it is needful with great diligence both always to be doing good things, and to keep ourselves heedfully in the thought of the heart from the very good things themselves, lest, if they uplift the mind, they be not good, which are enlisted not to the Creator, but to pride.

34. With reference to which particular we are not acting irregularly, if from the books, though not Canonical[b], yet brought out for the edifying of the Church, we bring forward testimony. Thus Eleazar in the battle smote and brought down an elephant, but fell under the very beast that he killed. Whom, then, does this one represent, whom his own victory bore down, but those persons who overcome bad habits, but by being lifted up are brought down under the very things they bring under? For it is as if he died under the enemy he lays low, who is lifted up by the sin that he subdues. Accordingly it deserves above every thing to be considered, that good points cannot avail, if bad ones that creep in unawares are not guarded against. All that is done perishes, if it be not heedfully preserved in humility. Hence too it is well said of the first parent himself; *And the Lord put the man into the Paradise of pleasure, to work and to keep it.* For he 'worketh,' who does in act the good that is enjoined. But what he has wrought he keepeth not, whom that creepeth upon which is forbidden. Therefore let blessed Job, because he had covered himself on every side with good practice, say, *With righteousness I was clothed, and arrayed myself as with a garment.* Where it is forthwith added,

1 Macc. 6, 46.

Gen. 2, 15.

And my judgment a diadem.

35. The judgments of the righteous are rightly compared to a 'diadem,' because by the gloriousness of great practice, they lead to a crown of rewarding. Which same judgments they carry on with themselves day by day in the interior, what they owe to God, what to their neighbour, they look to with quick discernment, and they kindle themselves with ardour to the doing of what is good, and rebuke themselves

[b] Cited by Cosin, Scholast. Hist. of Canon, c. viii. art. xcix. where some attempts at reconciling such statements with the decree of the Council of Trent are discussed. The same work contains a general review of authorities on the Canon of H. S. a subject too extensive for a mere note.

with severity for the evil things committed. Hence it is well said by Solomon as well; *The thoughts of the righteous are judgments.* Since within they are brought back to their own hearts from all the tumult of the world, and then they mount the tribunal of the mind, and set before the eyes themselves, and their neighbour, and bring forward in the midst the rule of the Testament, wherein it is said, *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.* They transfer into themselves the person of their neighbour, and heedfully mark what to themselves, had they been so circumstanced, they would justly have wished done or left undone, and so with strict justice and judgment, they try the cause of themselves and their neighbour by the tables of the Divine Law, in the court of the heart. Therefore it is well said, *The thoughts of the righteous are judgments*, because the very interior motion of their heart is itself as it were a kind of scales of judicial power. Which things being done, because they do not look for recompensing below, their judgments are rightly compared to 'a diadem.' For a diadem is set upon the upper part of the body; and so the judgment of the righteous is styled a 'diadem,' because they do not thereby covet to find their reward by it in things below and of this earth, but up above. It follows;

Book XIX. Prov. 12, 5. Matt. 7, 12.

Ver. 15, 16. *I was an eye to the blind, and a foot was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor, and the cause which I knew not I searched out.*

36. Herein the mind of the reader might perchance put the question, wherefore it is that blessed Job reckons up his own virtue with so much particularity. For it is a mark of holy men to conceal the good things they may have done, lest it chance that they bring upon themselves the downfall of exaltation. Whence Truth saith by Itself, *Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them.* It is hence, too, that in giving light to the two blind men sitting by the way-side, He charged them, saying, *See that no man know it.* Of which persons it is thereupon said, that they 'departed and spread abroad the fame of Him throughout all that region.' Now it is a question for us to consider, what this means, that the Almighty Himself, unto Whom to

xxiii. Matt. 6, 1. Matt. 9, 30.

Job 29, 15. Hist. have the will is the same thing as to have the power, both wished that His extraordinary powers should be kept secret, and notwithstanding by those that were illumined with sight as it were against His will He is made manifest. Which is nothing else than that to His servants following after Him He gave an example, that of themselves indeed they should desire to have their extraordinary endowments kept hidden from sight, and yet, that others might profit by their example, they should be brought to view against their will, and indeed by concealing their own achievements keep themselves safe, but whilst they are brought to view against their will, convey good examples on to their neighbours. So then let them be hidden in set purpose, and made public by necessity, and let the hiding of them be the safe keeping of self, and the making them public usefulness to others. Again, because Matt. 5, 15. 16. it is written, *Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but in a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, Which is in heaven.* There are times when holy persons are compelled to do good things even in the presence of their fellow-creatures, or else to tell these very deeds of theirs to their fellow-creatures, but only to this end relating every thing, viz. that by those works not they themselves, but their Father, Which is in heaven, may be glorified. For whilst they preach things holy, the very preaching itself perhaps goes for nought, of those whose life is not known. So they are forced to tell their own life, that they may be able to change the life of their hearers. And they relate their deeds that they may be held in veneration, and they seek to be venerated, that they may be listened to Ez.1,21. with awe. Since it is written; *And when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them.* Because it is so that when the minds of the hearers take in the life of those that preach, surely they necessarily admire the force of the preaching as well.

37. Hence it is therefore that good preachers at once eschew honour on account of being set up, and yet wish to be honoured on account of being imitated. In the same way surely Paul the Apostle, when speaking to the disciples,

at once flees honour, and yet shews how greatly he deserved to be honoured. For when he said to the Thessalonians; *For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know; nor a cloak of covetousness, God is witness:* he adds going on; *Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor of others, when we might have been burthensome to you as the Apostles of Christ; But we were gentle among you.* Again to the Corinthians, avoiding honour he saith; *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus Christ's sake.* Which same however he seeing to be led aside from the track of the true faith by the persuasions of false apostles, with the greatest pains shews to them how much he was worthy to be held in reverence, saying, *Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also. Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool,) I am more.* To which particulars he likewise adds how that to him the secrets of the third heaven also were set open, how that being caught up he even penetrated the mysteries of Paradise. See, how eschewing honour he proclaims himself the servant of the disciples. See how for the use of his hearers seeking honour, he advances the claims of his life above the false apostles. Since the great teacher acted with this view, that whilst he himself is seen and known for what he was, both the life and the tongue of those that preached amiss might by comparison with him be made worthless. Therefore in a wonderful way he both exhibits the grace of humility, and seeks accessions of usefulness, so as both to proclaim himself a servant of the disciples, and prove himself better than the adversaries. He displays to the disciples what he had been vouchsafed of humility, he displays to the opponents what he had been vouchsafed of loftiness. He makes appear in opposition to adversaries what he had by gift, he makes appear to disciples what he remains in himself in thought, he makes known to opponents what he is presented without in practice. So holy men, when they are constrained to relate the good things that they do, do not lend themselves to exaltation but usefulness. Whence to his friends, unjustly upbraiding him,

Book XIX.

1 Thess. 2, 5. 6. 7.

2 Cor. 4, 5.

2 Cor. 11, 22. 23.

Job 29, 15. Hist. and so not knowing the good things in him, blessed Job telling reveals them, that surely they might learn, not whilst upbraiding him to lift themselves up against his life, but holding their peace to copy the same. Though, as we have already often said above, the despair urged on him by those upbraiding him, forced him to recall his own deeds to remembrance. For amidst so many pains of wounding and words of despair, when he tells the things which he did, his mind as it were sunk down by words and wounds he sets anew to hope. So let him say the good things that he has done, that he may not be forced in the midst of so many evil things that he hears to despair of himself. *I was eyes to the blind, feet was I to the lame.*

38. When we are estimating the examples of holy practice, we ought first to mark what a right order is observed in relating them, so that first works of righteousness, next works of mercy should be described. For that man does well what is pitiful, who is taught first to observe what is just, so that the stream of mercy bestowed on our neighbours be brought from the fountain-head of righteousness. For there are many that in a manner render works of mercy to their neighbours, but do not abandon the deeds of unrighteousness, which same if they are anxious truly to shew mercy to their neighbours, ought first by living justly to have shewn pity to themselves. Whence it is written; *Have mercy upon thine own soul by pleasing God.* He then that would pity his neighbour must needs derive the original of pitying from himself. For it is written; *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* How, then, is he pitiful to another by shewing mercy, who by still living unjustly becomes pitiless to himself? Whence it is also said by one that was wise; *He that is evil to himself, to whom will he be good?* Since for shewing forth mercy, that it may be rendered to the needy outwardly in perfection, two things necessary agree together, i. e. the man that is to give, and the thing to be given. But the man is by far and without comparison better than the thing. And so he who gives up his outward substance to his neighbour in want, but does not keep his own life from doing evil, gives his estate to God, but himself to sin. The thing which is the lesser he offered to the Creator, and that

Ecclus. 30, 23. (Vulg. 24.)

Mat. 19. 19.

Ecclus. 14, 5.

which is the greater he reserved to wickedness. And so it is well said first by blessed Job, *With justice I was clothed and arrayed myself as with a garment, and with my judgment as with a diadem:* and is next added; *I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame.* Because there is then in God's sight the offering of true righteousness, when from the root of righteousness the branches of pitifulness proceed. But because in the very work of mercy itself the spirit is wont to be thought more of with the interior Judge than the thing done, observe that he declares that to 'the blind he had been eyes, to the lame feet.' For by saying these things assuredly he points out that both to the one he had held out a hand by himself, and that the other he bore up by carrying. From which it is gathered how greatly the bowels of his mercy were poured out upon the weak and needy. Whence it is added; *I was a father to the poor.* Book XIX.

39. Which same words if we refer to the utterance of Holy Church by a typical mode of interpretation, the same is 'eyes to the blind,' because she gives light by the Word, and the same 'feet to the lame,' because she stays them up by support. For by preaching she enlightens the blind, while the lame by helping she supports. For 'the blind' is he that as yet seeth not whither he is going, but 'the lame' is he who has not the power to go there where he sees. For frequently sin is committed either by ignorance or weakness, so that either the man knows not what he ought to desire, or cannot do every thing that he has the desire to do. Contrarily it is rightly said by the Psalmist, *The Lord is my light and my salvation.* For because the Lord bestows both knowledge and force, at once in opposition to ignorance He is called 'Light,' and in opposition to weakness 'Saving Health.' It is hence that it is said of the wicked, *Let their way be dark and slippery;* that is to say, that through the darkness they may not see where they should go, who even if they did see what was right, yet by reason of the slippery quality they should not be able to stand fast therein. And so the one sort through the slipperiness halt in the midst of good things, and the other sort through the darkness, are ignorant what good things to follow. Thus then Holy Church, being seized by tribulations at the end, calls to mind the old times when Allegg. Ps.27 1. Ps.35,6.

Job 29, 15. 16. Allegor. she was accustomed both to enlighten by teaching and to establish by helping, and speak with the lips of her foregoing member, saying,

I was an eye to the blind, and a foot was I to the lame.

40. And whereas she has gathered together two Peoples in herself, viz. the Jewish and the Gentile, by the 'blind,' the Gentile People may also be rightly denoted, and by 'the lame' the Jewish. Since the Gentile People had as it were no eyes, because the Law not being received it saw not where it ought to have gone. But on the other hand the Jewish People having eyes was lame, because the Law indeed in knowing it held, but did not stretch forth the step of right practice therein. For if the Gentile People had not been Is. 9, 2. blind, the Prophet would not say, *The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.* Again, if the Israelitish People had not gone lame to good practice, the Psalmist Ps. 18, 44. 45. would never have said in the voice of the Lord, *The strange children have lied to me: the strange children have waxed old, they have gone lame out of their paths.* Which doubtless is for this reason termed a lame People, in that it had not a sound step in practice, since it would not use both feet, while it admitted one Testament, and spurned the other. Which People when Holy Church receives coming to her, because to the same, already holding the Old Testament, she introduces the New Testament as well, for the directing the steps thereof, she as it were joins on another foot. Which faithful People of Holy Church still further adds aright, *I was a father to the poor*, because surely the humble, who are called 'poor in spirit,' are begotten by her preaching. But it is necessary for us in all these particulars to weigh with exactness the actual words of the history. For he says;

Ver. 16. *I was a father of the poor, and the cause, which I knew not, I searched out.*

xxiv. Hist. 41. For very often men give much to the poor, not because they love those poor, but because if they do not give, they dread the indignation of the Judge Above; which persons, if they were not afraid of God, would have had no mind to give the things they possess. And indeed in good deeds it is the first step of beginners, that he who does not yet know how to love his neighbour as himself, nevertheless should

yet henceforth begin to dread the judgments from Above. Thus because it is one thing to do a good deed by command and another to do it from affection as well, that the holy man may teach us the inward spirit of his practice, let him say, *I was a father to the poor.* For not a patron, or a neighbour, or an helper to the poor, but 'a father' he testifies that he had been; in this way, because by the great attentiveness of his charity he converted the purpose of mercy into the affection of nature, that he should look on those as children by love, whom he was the head of as a father by protecting. Therefore because the force of his mercy had copied nature, he records himself to have been a father to the poor. Where he likewise adds; BOOK XIX.

And the cause that I knew not, I most carefully searched out.

42. In which words we have to consider all the particulars how distinctly they are related, and that no profit is passed over by him. Since he is just in his actions, pitiful in his neighbours' infirmities, active in the concerns of the poor. For he that takes thought of the blessings of the eternal recompensing, must needs extend himself to every occasion of the repayment to follow after. For hence it is said by Solomon; *He that feareth God, neglecteth nothing.* Hence also Paul saith; *prepared unto every good work.* But herein we ought to bear in mind that occasionally in our actions lesser good things are to be let pass for the usefulness of greater ones. Thus who could be ignorant that it has the merit of a good work to bury the dead: and yet to one, who had prayed to be let go in order to the burying of his father, it was said; *Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.* Thus the dutifulness of this service was to be made to give place to the office of preaching, because by the first he would be burying persons dead in the flesh in the earth, by the other he would be raising up persons dead in the soul to life. By the Prophet likewise it is said to the chiefs of the Synagogue; *Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed.* And yet Paul the Apostle says; *Set them to judge, who are least esteemed in the Church.* For he was kindling his hearers' hearts to the excellency of wisdom, to different kinds of tongues, to the investigating XXV. Eccl. 7, 18. 2 Tim. 2, 21. Luk 9, 60. Is. 1, 17. 1 Cor. 6, 4.

Job 29, 16. Hist. the mysteries of prophecy also, saying, *Desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.* But because they would not be capable of 'spiritual gifts,' if earthly matters had weighed them to the ground, he premised long before, saying, *Set them to judge who are least esteemed in the Church.* As though he said in plain words; 'they that are of least worth in the Church, and not enriched with any power of extraordinary gifts, let these only judge concerning earthly matters, that by whom extraordinary good cannot be supplied, the lesser good may be.' Whom he at once styles 'contemptible,' and yet calls 'wise,' when he says; 1 Cor. 6, 5. *Is it so that there is not a wise man among you? no one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?* From which point what else is concluded but that they are to try earthly causes, who have received wisdom in things external? But they that have been enriched with spiritual gifts surely ought never to be entangled with earthly concerns, that while they are not compelled to manage the good things beneath, they may by being exercised be enabled to serve the interests of the good things Above.

43. But above every thing it needs to be looked to, that they who shine forth with spiritual gifts should never entirely abandon the affairs of their neighbours of weak condition, but that they should entrust the same to be managed by others, whom it is meet for. Whence also Moses appointed to the people seventy persons in the stead of himself, that in proportion as he buried himself out of the way of external causes he might with the greater fervour go into the things of the interior. And so it comes to pass, that those that are the highest advance more to spiritual gifts, when things that are lowest do not trample on their minds, and again the persons that are the last in the Church do not live without good practice, while in matters external they find right things which they may do. For Holy Church is so compacted by a unity of the faithful, as our body is made one by the jointing of the limbs. Thus there are some members in the body which are subservient to beholding the light, others which are never parted from the contact of earth. Since the eye is set intent on the light, and that it may not be made blind, it is kept safe from the dust. But the foot then rightly

discharges its office, when it does not shrink from taking on it the dust of the earth. Which same members of the body, however, are, by imparting their functions to one another, reciprocally united in one, so that the foot should run for the eyes, and the eye look out for the feet.

44. Thus, then, thus ought the members of Holy Church to be at once distinct in office and united in charity, that the highest persons may look out the way of those, who go at liberty in the concerns of earth, so that the foot may as it were walk by the light of the eyes, and again that whatever they execute, being busied with the affairs of earth, this they may apply to the use of the greater sort, so that the foot, whose way is looked out, may step not for itself only but for the eyes as well. And so whilst they suit one another by turns, by reciprocal ministering, in a wonderful way it is brought about, that whereas all the Elect, by bestowing labour on one another, do what they are able, those works too become their own, which they cannot do themselves.

45. But herein we ought to bear in mind, that when those are wanting, who might fitly minister to the exterior occasions of their neighbours, those too who are full of spiritual gifts ought to lower themselves to their inferiority, and, as far as they may with propriety be able, lend themselves with the condescension of charity to the earthly necessities of those persons. Nor should it weary the mind, if its perception, being ever intent on the contemplation of the spiritual, is sometimes as it were bent down, diminished in managing the least concerns, when that Word, by Which all things created are held together, in order that He might benefit mankind, having taken to Him the nature of man, was willing to be 'made a little less than the Angels.' What wonder, then, if man for man's sake draws himself in, when the Creator of men and Angels for man's sake took upon Him the form of man? Not however that the perception is diminished when it is thus drawn in; because it penetrates the things above with more exact penetration, in proportion as with more abundant humility for the love of the Creator it does not even despise the things beneath. What is there that is unworthy of us or difficult, if we carry the mind above

Job 29, 16. and below, when of the body we wash the face with the same hand, with which we shoe the foot? Therefore let blessed Job, because when he was doing great things he did not think the least things beneath him, let him say, *And the cause that I knew not I very carefully searched out.*

Hist. Moral.

46. Wherein I see it is to be noted, that for delivering sentence we should not ever be precipitate, that things not examined into we should not rashly judge, that any thing heard of a bad nature should not affect us, that what is reported every where about we should not credit without proving. Which same, without doubt, we shall be afraid of committing, if we consider the doings of our Creator with some degree of minuteness. For that very Creator, that He might withhold us from a precipitate delivery of sentence, whereas 'all things are naked and open to His eyes,' yet refused to judge the evil deeds of Sodom when heard, in that He saith; *Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is very great, and because their cry is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me; and if not, I will know.* Thus God, Who is Almighty and knowing all things, wherefore does He before the proving seem to doubt, but in order to set forth to us an example of gravity, that the evil of our fellow-creatures we should never venture to believe before we prove it? Observe how by His Angels He comes down for the ascertaining of the evil, and immediately smites the culprits; and He That is patient, He Who is gentle, He, of Whom it is written; *But Thou, Lord, judgest with tranquillity.* He, of Whom it is written again; *The Lord is a patient Rewarder*, finding them involved in such enormous guilt, as it were overlooked patience, and would not await the day of Final Judgment for vengeance, but with the fire of judgment prevented them before the Day of Judgment. See, the evil He in seeming believed with difficulty when He heard it, but visited without backwardness when acquainting Himself He found it true; surely that He might give us an example that worse crimes are both to be believed with difficulty, when they are heard, and to be punished more quickly when they are truly ascertained. For this heedfulness accordingly blessed Job entertaining anxious

Heb. 4, 13.

Gen. 18, 20. 21.

Wisd. 12, 18.

Ecclus. 5, 4.

interest, saith, *The cause that I knew not, I very carefully searched out.* Which same words we may likewise apply not inappropriately in the voice of the Church to a typical way of interpretation. For that same Church by her elect members does when she judges the evil deeds of carnal men 'search out that, which she knows not,' in that the evil things which she knows not in doing them, she searches out in correcting them in judgment. And so Holy Church, when she shall be cramped for a time by the villainy of the unjust, remembers, saying, *The cause that I knew not, I very carefully searched out.* As though she said in plain speech; 'The evil that in mine Elect I knew not in doing, in wicked men I did, by judging, chasten with severity.' And because she now bruises the devil by the power of her preaching, and carries off out of his mouth the soul of every one that she receives, he goes on in the words; Book XIX. Alleg.

Ver. 17. *And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.*

47. Oh what a spoil did she take from the mouth of the devil, when by converting she carried off Saul himself the spoiler; when *still breathing threats* he was on his way to Damascus, *having received letters*, and whereas by persecuting the faithful he was gathering prey for the devil, he was, by being made acquainted with the faith, himself gathered to Christ. As many times did the Church 'pluck the spoil out of the mouth of the wicked,' as often as by preaching she snatched off a soul from the gripe of error. For who can be more truly called a wicked one than the devil? whose 'jaws we break,' as often as by arguing against his deceits, we bring to light his secret contrivances. And so we 'pluck the spoil out of his teeth,' because the soul, which he had already bitten by breaking it to sin, by converting we recover to the saving health of life. Since by 'the jaws' are exhibited his hidden plots, while by the teeth the now open commission of sin. Of which same jaws and teeth it is said by the Psalmist; *But God shall break their teeth in their mouth; the Lord shall break the jaw bones of the lions.* But the holy man declares himself to 'break the jaws' first that he might afterwards be able to 'carry away the spoil from the teeth' of that one; because we then truly snatch the prey from his teeth, when xxvi. Acts 9, 12. Ps. 58, 6.

Job 29, 18. Allegory. we first know how to break his jaws. For it is necessary first to bring to light the secret artifices of his contrivances, that afterwards we may be able to recover the soul of our hearer from open falling. The jaws of this wicked one the chief pastor of the Church himself did by preaching break in pieces, when he said, *Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour; Whom resist, stedfast in the faith.* Against this 'lion' Holy Church, because she sees his plottings, guards the folds of the faith. Whose 'jaws she breaks' as often as she destroys the arguments of heretics, and as many times 'seizes the spoil out of his teeth,' as she by preaching converts a man from error. And because there shall then be many of the just, who reckoned that they would depart out of this world in the time of the Church's peace, blessed Job, while he tells his own case, likewise points out the voices of the just coming after him, saying;

1 Pet. 5, 8. 9.

Ver. 18. *Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as a palm.*

xxvii. 48. What else is set forth in this place by the title of a 'nest,' but the tranquil rest of the faith whereby every infirm soul is nourished? For that multitude of the good, which shall be overtaken by the times of persecution, thought to accomplish the days of its nourishings, as in a nest, so in a place of repose. For except that Holy Church now nourished up the weak children severally in the nest of peace, the Psalmist would not say, *Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house, and the turtle a nest where she may lay her young.* Since henceforth 'the sparrow hath found her an house,' because our Redeemer has entered into the Eternal dwelling-place of heaven. And 'the turtle hath found a nest,' because Holy Church, influenced by love of the Creator, makes use of frequent sighings, and as it were builds up a 'nest' for herself, i. e. the most peaceful rest of the Faith, wherein her growing children, like callow young, till they fly up to the regions above, she fosters, cherished warm in the bosom of charity. And so because there shall then be those, who thought in the time of peace to take their passage to the regions on high, i. e. to soar away from the nest, their voice is anticipated by the voice of blessed Job, when he says,

Ps. 84, 3.

Then I said, I shall die in my nest. But because this same quietness of peace they promised themselves in a length of many days, he rightly subjoins, saying, *And I shall multiply my days as a palm.* For the palm advances slowly, but holds on long in greenness. But with many difficulties Holy Church comes to the firm standing of the Faith, and for the gathering together of very many she desires to be set the longer in the glory of that Faith. And so as 'a palm' she thought 'to multiply her days,' who on the crisis of sudden temptation emerging upon her, grieves for the boon of peace at once slowly gotten by the faithful, and quickly intercepted by the unbelievers.

49. Nor is it unfairly that the life of the righteous is likened to a 'palm,' in this respect, that the palm below is rough to be touched, and in a manner enveloped in dry barks, but above it is fair with fruit even to be looked at; below it is compressed by the enfoldings of its barks, above it is spread out in amplitude of beautiful greenness. For so is the life of the Elect, despised below, beautified above. Down beneath the one is as it were enfolded in many barks, in that it is straitened by innumerable afflictions. But on high the other is as it were spread out with the foliage of beautiful greenness in the amplitude of the rewarding. The palm too has another thing as well, by which it differs from all kinds of trees. For every tree holds, in its timber, large sized towards the ground, but in growing it is narrowed above, and in proportion as it is by degrees higher, it is rendered so much the minuter on high; but the palm sets out of less circumference from the bottom, and arises with wider timber towards the boughs and fruit; and that which goes on slender from the bottom grows up more huge to the top. Accordingly to what but earthly minds are other trees found to be like, expanded below, narrowed above? because surely all the lovers of this world are strong in the things of earth, but feeble in the things of heaven. Thus for temporal glory they long to spend themselves even to death itself; and for the everlasting hope they do not though but a little hold on in exertion. For the sake of earthly gains they submit to any injuries, and for the sake of the heavenly reward they refuse to bear the insults even of the most trifling word.

Job 29, 18. Allegor. They are strong enough to stand before an earthly judge even a whole day through, but in praying in the presence of God they are tired even with the space of a single hour. [1] dejectionem. Oftentimes they bear nakedness, abjectness[1], hunger, for the sake of acquiring riches and honours, and they torment themselves with the stinting of those things, which they are in such haste to obtain; but from seeking with hearty endeavour the things that are above, they excuse themselves the more, in proportion as they imagine them to be more slowly paid back. So these as it were after the manner of the rest of the trees are wide spread below, narrow above, because they hold strong towards the parts below, but go off towards the parts above. But on the other hand by the character of palm trees the progressive life of the righteous is represented, who are never strong in earthly pursuits, and weak in heavenly ones, but exhibit themselves devoted to God with a farther and wider extension[2] than they remember to have been to the world. For whereas it is said to certain persons by our Preacher, *I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh; for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness;* without doubt there is a condescending to their infirmity, as though it were said to them in plainer terms; 'If ye cannot any way do more, at all events be ye such in the fruit of good works as ye were for long in the practising of bad habits, so that the holy freedom of charity may not possess you weaker persons, whom the habit of earthly pleasure possessed strong ones in the flesh.

[2] 'longius atque distantius.' Rom. 6, 19.

50. But there are some who, while they aim at heavenly things, and forsake the pernicious doings of this world, by the littlemindedness of inconstancy fall away day by day from their setting out. To what but to the rest of the trees should I call these like, who never rise such persons above as they spring up below? For these when they are brought to conversion do not hold on such as they began; and as it were after the way of trees, they are of large size in the beginning, but they grow slight, because little by little through the accessions of the divisions of time they suffer the diminutions of the attainments of virtue. For imperceptibly heavenly

desires fade away in them, and they who had proposed to themselves things vigorous and strong, achieve only weak and feeble ones, and whilst they progress by increase of age, grow as it were easy to be bent. But the palm, as has been said, is of vaster extent in the summit than it began with being from the root; because oftentimes the conversion of the Elect accomplishes more in finishing than it purposes on setting out; and if it begins the first things somewhat lukewarmly, it completes the last with more ardour; that is to say, it reckons itself to be always beginning, and therefore it lasts unwearied in newness. It was this constancy of the righteous that the Prophet regarding said, *But they that trust in the Lord shall change their strength; they shall take to them wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint.* For they 'change their strength,' because they are earnest to be strong in spiritual practice, who were for long strong in the flesh. And they 'take to them the wings as of an eagle,' because by exercising contemplation they fly; 'they walk, and do not faint,' because they hold in the rapidity of their understanding, that they may condescend to the slower sort. But under all circumstances in proportion as the good things they receive they gladly adapt to others, so much the more do they hold on themselves unchangeable in newness; and they that proceed small from the root of the beginning are consolidated as strong in the finishing of the topmost point. So then let blessed Job say in his own person, let him say in the voice of Holy Church in behalf of those whom in the time of peace she had owned, converted to herself, and imagined would persevere in good ways, *Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as a palm.* For 'as a palm' she thought to 'multiply her days,' in that she supposed that the minds of the faithful would rise up stronger even to the very last. For when the hearts of multitudes worn out with persecutions begin to turn soft, she henceforth grieves that those in her as it were tend to weakness, whom she used to admire for their having purposed strong things. And because in mind she is always intent upon spiritual knowledge, it is rightly subjoined,

Is. 40, 31.

Ver. 19. *My root is opened beside the waters.*

Job 29, 19. xxviii. b. viii. c. 81. 51. For 'by the waters the root is opened,' when, for receiving the streams of truth, secretly the thought of the mind is spread out. For as we have already said in a former book, in Holy Writ by the term of 'the root' the hidden thought is used to be denoted. Therefore "our root we open by the waters," when to the Interior watering we stretch the thought of the secret heart. Which same words if we carry on to the voice of Holy Church, her 'root' must be taken for the very Incarnation our Redeemer itself. Which 'root is opened by the waters,' in that God Invisible by the assumption of His Manhood was laid open to the regardings of our sight. Since the Creator, Who was not able to be seen in the Godhead, took to Him from us that whereby He might by us be seen. So 'the root is opened by the waters,' because the Author of the human race by means of His human nature is manifested to human beings. Whence also it is rightly said by the Psalmist, *And he shall be like a tree that is planted beside the runnings of waters.* For 'the runnings of waters' are the daily passings by of peoples dying off. And Truth saith concerning Itself, *If they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* And so there 'is a tree beside the runnings of waters,' because, whilst putting forth fruit and the covering of His shade for us, the Creator appeared in the flesh, that by a rising again He might stay the human race, which by a falling off was day by day going on into death. It goes on;

Ps. 1, 3. Luke 23, 31.

And the dew shall stay on my harvest.

xxix. 52. Understand, *I said.* For the harvest of Holy Church is not inappropriately taken to be, when perfect souls withdrawn from their bodies, like ripe crops cut away from the ground, are transported into the heavenly granaries; which same because it takes place not by our own power, but by heavenly grace vouchsafing it, he saith well, *And the dew shall stay on my harvest.* For the dew falls from above, but the harvest is gathered in from below. And so 'the dew stays on the harvest,' because grace coming from above causes it, that we should be meet persons to be gathered in from the world below. For by that same grace watering us from above, we bear the fruit of good practice. Whence also it is rightly said by Paul, *But by*

1 Cor. 15, 10.

the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace, which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain. For if it be enquired what is the dew coming from above, he tells us, *By the grace of God I am what I am.* If we look at the crop growing up beneath the dew, he says, *And His grace was not in vain in me, but I laboured more abundantly than they all.* It proceeds;

Ver. 20. *My glory shall always be fresh in me, and my bow shall be renewed in mine hand.*

53. Understand, *I said*; since all is joined on to the sentence above, that is introduced next in a continuous thread of discourse, when he says, *Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the palm;* and afterwards it is subjoined, *My root is opened by the waters, and the dew shall stay on my harvest; my glory shall ever be fresh in me, and my bow shall be renewed in mine hand.* To all that know what is true it is clear, that to the old life qualities of evil are proper, to the new qualities of virtue. Thus it is hence that Paul saith, *Putting off the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new man.* Hence he says again, *Our old man is crucified with him.* Hence the Psalmist speaking in a type of man, as being caught in the midst of evil spirits, saith, *I have waxed old amongst all mine enemies.* For unto fervour of mind, whether amidst spiritual enemies, or in the midst of our several carnal neighbours, in some degree by the mere habituation of living 'we wax old,' and the form of newness taken upon us we soil. Against which same oldness, however, if our earnest pains after heedfulness be daily on the watch, by praying, by reading, and living well we are renewed afresh; because our life, while it is washed with tears, exercised in good works, drawn out by holy meditations, is without ceasing restored to its newness. Blessed Job then so tells his own case that he represents ours, because Holy Church, when she sees her faithful ones return to the transgressions of the old life, is forced to lament for those whom she sees lose the newness of the interior. Since the great Preacher says to his disciples, *For what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord?* And so Holy

xxx.

Col. 3, 9.

Rom. 6, 6.

Ps. 6, 7.

1 Thess. 2, 19.

Job 29, 20. ALLEG. Church bewails her glory departed, when she sees her faithful ones return to the old life. Thus she says, *I said, My glory shall always be made fresh;* because those whom she believed were enlisted within her to the new life, she sees to be lending themselves to old desires.

54. Now by the name of a 'bow' in Holy Scripture, sometimes the plots of evil men, sometimes the Day of Judgment, while sometimes the actual sacred Oracles themselves are denoted. Since by a bow plots are denoted, as where it is Ps.64,3. said by the Psalmist, *And have bent their bow, a bitter thing.* Moreover by 'a bow' the Day of the Last Judgment is denoted, Ps.60,3. 4. as where it is said again by the same Psalmist, *Thou hast shewed Thy people hard things, Thou hast made us to drink the wine of remorse, Thou hast given a token to them that fear Thee, that they may fly from before the bow.* For in a bow in proportion as the string is drawn out far, the arrow flies off the keener from it. Thus, yes, thus the Day of Judgment, in proportion as it is delayed for long that it should come, when it does come, the keener the sentence goes forth therefrom. But for this reason we are now stricken with sundry losses, in order that being amended thereby, we may then be found more prepared. Whence it is there premised, *Thou hast shewed Thy people hard things,* i. e. the scourges of the present state, which are forerunners of the Day of Judgment, to follow far worse. *Thou hast made us to drink the wine of remorse,* so that earthly joys should be converted into tears. *Thou hast given a token to them that fear Thee, that they may fly from before the bow.* As though he said in plain terms; 'This is the season of mercy, that shall be the time of Judgment.' Thus by these scourges of this present time Thou dost betoken how Thou wilt then strike when Thou judgest not sparing, Who dost now strike so sharply when Thou sparest.

55. But sometimes by a 'bow' Holy Scripture is denoted as well. For *that* is the 'bow' of the Church, *that* is the 'bow' of the Lord, wherefrom like arrows striking, so do terrifying sentences come to the hearts of men. Whence Ps.7,12. 13. also it is rightly said by the Psalmist, *He hath bent His bow, and made it ready; He hath also prepared in it the vessels*

of death, He hath made His arrows for the burning ones. For the Lord hath 'bent His bow,' because to all sinners He hath set forth threats in sacred Revelation. In which same bow He 'prepares the vessels of death,' because according to the sentence of His Revelation, those that neglect to be reformed now, He condemns as reprobate. In which bow also He 'made His arrows for the burning ones,' because against those persons, whom He amends by terror, He sends forth the kindled sentences of words. Concerning this bow of the preachers it is declared by Isaiah; *With arrows and with bows they enter in thither;* in this way, because the holy Apostles came for the smiting the hardness of the Gentiles' life with the keen dartings of words. What then in this place is to be understood by the name of the bow but sacred Revelation? For by the string the New Testament, while by the bow the Old Testament, is understood. Now in a bow when the string is drawn, the horn is bended: so in this same sacred Revelation, when the New Testament is read, the hardness of the Old is rendered pliant. For to the spiritual and mild precepts of this, the rigidness of the letter of the other bends itself; because whilst the New Testament as it were by a kind of arm of good practice is drawn, in the Old Testament the claims of severity are relaxed. Nor do we improperly say that the string accords with the New Testament, which it is certain came out by the Incarnation of the Lord. And so as it were the string is drawn and the horns bent; because when in the New Testament the Incarnation of our Mediator is seen, the rigidness of the Old Testament is made to bend to a spiritual signification. Therefore the holy man says, *I said, My glory shall always be fresh, and my bow shall be renewed in mine hand.*

Book XIX.

Is.7,24.

56. 'A bow in the hand' is Holy Writ in the practising. For he holds 'a bow in his hand,' who performs by the practising the divine revelations which he learns by apprehension. Thus the 'bow is renewed in the hand,' in that whatever is learnt belonging to Holy Revelation by studying is fulfilled by living accordingly. Hence also Solomon when he was describing the strong warriors of the spiritual fight, says, *All holding swords, being well instructed for*

Cant. 3, 8.

Job 29, 20. *wars.* For what is represented in Divine Writ by 'a sword,' Paul laid open by saying, *And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.* Now Solomon saith not 'all having' but 'all *holding* swords;' surely because not only to know the word of God is admirable, but likewise to do it. For he has but does not 'hold' a sword, who knows indeed Divine Revelation, but neglects to live according to it, and he cannot now any longer be 'well instructed to wars,' who never exercises the spiritual sword that he has. For he is altogether not equal to resist temptations, who by living badly puts it behind him to hold this sword of the word of God. So then let Holy Church, which is weighed down by subsequent persecution, taking thought of the multitude of bad and the scarcity of good ones, by the accents of blessed Job foreannounce her own woes, saying, *Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as a palm. My root is opened wide by the waters, and the dew shall stay on my harvest. My glory shall ever be fresh, and my bow shall be renewed in mine hand.* Which same, whilst taking a view of all things, was never imposed on by a false hope. For they that be perfect now see many her supporters, but doubtless they reflect that on the crisis of temptation coming forth, the greater number of these become her enemies, who in the time of peace seem to be her citizens. But they do not despair of all in like manner, yet nevertheless it very frequently falls out that those persons, touching whom they had entertained more confident assurance as to the Faith, themselves become fiercer enemies of the Faith, so that they then see those acting against the sacred Oracles, by whose working they had thought to restore those same sacred Oracles to the benefit of preaching. Which same times, however, we lament have now already commenced, when we see numbers, set within the pale of the Church, who either refuse to practise what they understand, or this very sacred Revelation likewise disdain to see into and to know. For turning away the hearing from the truth, they are turned to fables, whilst *all seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's.* The written words of God every where found are presented to their eyes, but men disdain to acquaint themselves with these, scarce one seeks to know what he has

Allegd. Eph. 6, 17.

Phil. 2, 21.

ieved. So then let the multitude of good men going
ore grieve to have their 'bow destroyed,' which same
ays thought to have sacred Revelation restored by the
rts of those coming after.

BOOK XX.

The five concluding verses of chapter twenty-nine of the Book of Job are more largely explained, together with the whole of chapter thirty, chiefly on the subject of heretics and carnal persons distressing the Church.

i. 1. ALTHOUGH all knowledge and all lore Sacred Scripture without all comparison far excels, to say nothing that it tells forth what is true; that it bids to the heavenly country; that it changes the heart of him that reads it from earthly desires to the embracing of things Above; that by its obscurer statements it exercises the strong, and by its humble strain speaks gently to the little ones; that it is neither so shut up, that it should come to be dreaded, nor so open to view as to become contemptible; that by use it removes weariness, and is the more delighted in the more it is meditated on; that the mind of him, who reads it, by words of a low pitch it assists, and by meanings of a lofty flight uplifts; that in some sort it grows with the persons reading, that by uninstructed readers it is in a manner reviewed, and yet by the well instructed is always found new; so then to say nothing of the weightiness of the subjects, it goes beyond all forms of knowledge and teaching even by the mere manner of its style of speaking, because in one and the same thread of discourse, while it relates the text, it declares a mystery, and has the art so to tell the past, that merely by that alone it knows how to announce the future, and the order of telling remaining unaltered, is instructed by the very self-same forms of speech at once to describe things done before, and to tell things destined to be done, just as it is with these same words of blessed Job, who while he tells his own circumstances foretels ours, and while he points out his own sorrows in respect of the phrase, sounds of the cases and occasions of Holy Church in respect of the meaning. For he says;

Ver. 21—23. *They that heard me awaited my sentence, and listening kept silence at my counsel. They dared not to add any thing to my words, and my speech dropped upon them. And they waited for me as the rain, and opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain.*

ii. 2. For this awe of those under him we unquestionably believe to have been towards blessed Job. But as we have already often said, Holy Church being driven to extremities by the inflictions of heretics or carnal persons, remembers the times past, in which all that is spoken by her is listened to with fear by the faithful, and lamenting the frowardness of her adversaries, she says, *They that heard me awaited my sentence, and listening kept silence at my counsel.* As though she expressed herself in plain speech, 'Not like these forward and swoln ones, who whilst they refuse to admit the words of truth, do as it were in teaching forestall the sentences of my preaching.' Whose disciples now 'intent upon her counsel keep silence,' because her words they dare not to impugn, but take on faith. For that they may be able to profit by these same words, they hear them, doubtless, not with a view to judge them, but to follow them.

3. Of whom it is rightly added, *To my words they dared not to add any thing;* surely because heretics, at that time when against her they are in liberty the most mischievous, free of all check, do 'dare to add something to her words,' in that they busy themselves as if to correct the rightness of her preachings. Which same still further adds touching the good hearers, *And my speech dropped upon them.*"

4. By this dropping of speech, what else is understood but the measure of holy preaching? because it is requisite that the boon of exhortation be bestowed to each according to the capacity of his parts. And in respect of this that is said, *To my words they dared not to add any thing;* the reverential feeling of the persons hearing is extolled; but in respect of this, that is added, *And my speech dropped upon them;* the masters' distributing is pointed out. For one who teaches ought to look exactly, that he be not forward to preach more than is comprehended by the one who hears him. For it is his duty by contracting himself to let himself down to the

Job 29, 21—23. Allegory. infirmity of his hearers, lest whilst he speaks to little persons lofty things, which for that reason will not profit them, he be more minded to make a display of himself than to benefit his hearers. Now at the Lord's bidding, there are not only flagons but likewise cups prepared for the table of the Tabernacle. For what is denoted by ' flagons' but ample preaching, and what by cups but the smallest and slightest speaking about God? Therefore on the table of the Lord there are both flagons and cups made ready, in this way because in the teaching of sacred Revelation there are not only to be set forth things great and mysterious that intoxicate, but also little and minute ones, which afford knowledge as it were in a tasting. So then let Holy Church being borne down in the last times remember this most discriminating disposal of hers, and let her say, *And my speech dropped upon them.*

Ex. 25, 29. 37, 16.

5. Where too it is fitly added, *They waited for me as the rain, and opened their mouth as for the latter rain.* For the words of holy preaching we undergo as rain, when by true humility we learn the dryness of our hearts, that we may be watered by the draught of holy preaching. Whence also it is rightly said to God by the Psalmist, *My soul is like earth without water to Thee.* The Prophet charges us to be bathed with these streams of teaching, saying, *Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters.* Who whilst in the final portion of the world we now receive the words of holy preaching, as it were ' open the mouth of the heart to the latter rain.' For if there were not in the heart ' a mouth,' the Psalmist would not say, *Crafty lips in heart, and with the heart they have spoken evil things.* The mouth of the heart, then, because we apply ourselves to the word of the preaching at the end, this, I say, we as it were open to the latter streams. Which same preaching came forth to us by the sacrifice of Him, Who says by the Psalmist, *And the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.* For because our Redeemer at the end of the world underwent the violence of those that persecuted Him, Himself He ' gave an evening sacrifice for us.' Of this ' latter rain' it is elsewhere written, *I will give you rain, both the early, and the latter rain.* For He ' gave the early rain,' because in the former period He

Ps. 143, 6. Is. 55, 1. Ps. 12, 2. Ps. 141, 2. Jer. 5, 24. Deut. 11, 14.

1 ' *temporivam*'

bestowed on His Elect the knowledge of the Law. He 'gave the latter rain,' because He caused the mystery of His Incarnation to be preached in the last days. Which same mystery because Holy Church ceases not to tell forth day by day, she waters the mouths of her hearers' hearts as it were by 'the latter rain.' It goes on; BOOK XX.

Ver. 24. *If I laughed on them, they believed it not; and the light of my countenance fell not on the ground.*

6. If we understand this according to the words of the history, it must be imagined that the holy man had shewn himself such to those under him, that even in laughing he was able to be feared. But whereas he relates above that he had been 'a father to the poor, and the comforter of the widows;' the case needs very great penetration to discriminate how and in what way in such terribleness of government there was likewise so much gentleness and mildness of pity there present. For without extraordinary gentleness of loving-kindness there was not this, viz. that he describes himself 'the father of the poor, and comforter of the widows;' whilst again without great severity he could not even when 'laughing' be feared: on which point what else are we taught, but that such ought to be the management of governance, that he who is in command should rule himself towards those under him by this measure, that both while laughing he may be feared, and when angered be loved, that neither excessive mirth should render him contemptible, nor unlimited severity make him hated? For oftentimes we break in pieces those under our charge when we maintain the energy of justice beyond what is just, which energy will surely now no longer be that of justice, if it do not keep itself under just control. And often those under us we unloose from the fear of discipline, if to our rule we let go the reins of mirth, because whilst they behold us joyful as it were at our liberty, they are themselves boldly let loose to what they are not at liberty. But that the countenance of the ruler may even when joyful be feared, it is necessary that he should himself unceasingly fear the countenance of his own Maker. For credit then is with difficulty given to that mind as to gladness, which it is known by those under its charge chastens itself continually for the love of God. For he who with an

Job 29, 24. Hist. uninterrnitted fever of spiritual desire seeks after things above, has this come into very great doubt concerning him, that he is sometimes glad of heart before men. And hence that same blessed Job was not long afterwards to say, *For I always feared God as waves swelling over me.* For he so feared his Judge as immediately impending assaults of waves, now, now on the point to die. He then into whose mind the sadness of the fear of God had poured itself, rightly did those under him not believe his joyfulness; because they were forced not to believe him when he laughed, whose heart they knew what unremitting sadness possessed under the fear of his Creator.

7. That also may not unsuitably be understood after the history, which is next brought in directly; *And the light of my countenance fell not on the ground.* Since it is written; Prov. 17, 24. *But the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.* And Ecc. 2, 14. again it is said by the same Solomon, *The wise man's eyes are in his head.* Paul also said; *The head of every man is* 1 Cor. 11, 3. *Christ.* So 'the wise man's eyes are in his head,' in that he is ever contemplating the works of his Redeemer that he should imitate them. So 'the light of his countenance fell not on the ground,' because those things that are of the earth he beheld not in concupiscence.

Alleg. 8. But whereas we have made out the outside of the history in brief, what lies concealed in the points belonging to mystical meaning let us consider well. That Christ and the Church are one Person, we have very frequently said already, and it oftentimes happens that the voice of the Head passes to the voice of the Body, and often that the voice of the Body passes over to the voice of the Head. For they that consist in one flesh, nothing hinders but that they also accord in one voice. So then let her say in the voice of the Head touching His Elect members, let the Church say, *If I laughed on them they believed it not;* since for God to 'laugh' is for the ways of the Saints to be made to prosper by His favour following them. As it is also expressed by common usage of those, whom in this world the caresses of good fortune accompany; 'The time smiled upon them.' Whence reversely it is called the wrath of God to be dis- Ps. 2, 12. abled from good practice. As it is written; *Lest the Lord*

be angry, and ye perish from the right way. If then the Lord is said to be 'angry' when men lose the way of righteousness, the Lord is rightly described as 'smiling' when our good works the favour of grace from Above accompanies on the way. But all the Elect so long as they are in this life never hold out to themselves the assurance of security. For being at all times alive to suspicion against temptations, they dread the plottings of the hidden enemy, who even on temptation ceasing, are greatly disturbed even by the mere suspecting only. For oftentimes to many heedless security has proved great hazard, so that the plots of the crafty enemy they should be made acquainted with, not when tried, but when already laid low. For we have always to be on the watch, that the mind unceasing in its solicitude never be slackened in its heavenly bent, that abandoning what is painful, laid low in loose thoughts as in a kind of soft litters, the mind be not all undone and prostitute itself to that corrupter the devil on his coming. But the soul must always be gathered up for the encounter of the adversary, always there must be caution provided against secret snares. For hence the Prophet Habakkuk saith; *I will stand upon my watch.* Hab. 2, 1. Hence again it is written; *Set thee up a watch tower, make thee bitternesses, [thou that preachest glad tidings to Sion*[1]*.]* Jer. 31, 21. Hence it is said by Solomon, *Happy is the man that always feareth; but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.* Prov. 28, 14. Hence he saith again; *Every man hath his sword upon his thigh, because of fears in the night.* Cant. 3, 8. The 'fears in the night' are the hidden snares of temptation. But 'the sword upon the thigh' is watch on guard, keeping down the enticements of the flesh. So then that 'the fear by night,' i. e. secret and sudden temptation, may not creep upon us, it is always necessary that the 'sword' of watching placed thereon should press our thigh. For holy men are so assured touching hope, that nevertheless they are ever mistrustful touching temptation, as being those to whom it is said; *Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto Him with trembling:* Ps. 2, 11. so that by hope rejoicing should be produced, and by mistrust 'trembling.' In whose voice the Psalmist saith again, *Let my heart rejoice that it may fear Thy Name.* Ps. 86, 11. Wherein it is to be noted, that he does not say, 'Let

[1] not in text.

Job 29, 24. Allegg. it rejoice that it may be assured;' but, 'let it rejoice that it may fear.' For they remember that though their course of conduct be made to succeed, they are still in this life, touch-

Job 7, 1. ing which it is said by that same Job; *The life of man upon*

Wisd. 9, 15. *earth is trial.* They remember again that it is written; *For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind, that museth upon many things.* They remember and they stand in fear, and they do not dare to promise to themselves in themselves assuredness, but being set between the joy of hope and the fear of temptation, they trust and they fear, they are heartened and they falter, they are assured and they are distrustful. Therefore it is well said by the voice of the elect member under a figure of our Head, *If I laughed on them, they believed it not.* Because our Redeemer as it were smiling on us we do not believe when His many gifts now bearing their testimony, we at once receive the boon of His favour, and yet still go faltering under His judgment for our own frailty.

9. Let us see how to Paul there is henceforth both a 'smiling' through grace from Above, and he himself still 'believes not' as it were through the fear of misgiving. Already the Lord as it were speaking to him from Heaven, and whilst opening his eyes inwardly, closing them outwardly, had displayed the power of His Majesty: already He

Acts 9, 15. had said to Ananias concerning Him; *For he is a chosen*

2 Cor. 12, 2. *vessel unto Me.* Already he had been transported to the third heaven above himself. Already carried into Paradise he had heard mystic words, which he might not tell, and

1 Cor. 9, 27. yet being still fearful he says, *But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others I should be a castaway.* See how to Divine grace smiling on him he already trusts in respect of hope, and yet trusts not in respect of self-assurance. For that these words agree perfectly with the words of our Redeemer, those subjoined do also declare, when it is said, *And the light of my countenance did not fall upon the earth.* For what is styled 'the earth' but the sinner, to whom it was said by the first

Gen. 3, 19. sentence; *Earth thou art, and unto earth shalt thou return?* So 'the light of the Lord's countenance does not fall to the earth,' because the brightness of His Vision does not

appear to sinners. Thus it is written; *Let the ungodly man be removed away that he see not the glory of God.* For light would as it were fall upon the earth, if when He comes in the Last Judgment, He manifested the brightness of His Majesty to sinners. Book XX. Is. 26, 10.

10. But if we receive these words in the voice of Holy Church, we may not unsuitably understand that 'the light of her countenance does not fall upon the earth,' because to them that are busied in earthly courses she forbids to preach the highest mysteries of her contemplation. For what is strong she forbids to be spoken to the weak, lest whilst they hear things incapable of being comprehended, they be borne to the ground by the words of preaching by which they should have been lifted up. For the mere corporeal light, which illumines sound eyes, darkens weak ones, and whilst by weak seeing eyes the gaze is set on the brightness of the sun, there is very frequently darkness produced to them from light. Thus let Holy Church being borne down in the time of her persecution, but bearing in mind her foregoing discrimination, say, *The light of my countenance did not fall upon the earth.* But because these words we began to take as from her Head, let us in the Same still follow out what comes after. For it is added:

Ver. 25. *If I was minded to go to them, I sat chief.*

11. Because in the heart of lost sinners, the actions of the flesh are in the first place, and of the soul in the second, surely in their thoughts Christ 'sits' not 'first' but 'last.' But each of the Elect, because above all others they mind the things that are eternal, and if there be any things of a temporal kind, they manage them with an after and the least concern; to whom it is also said by the preceptress voice of Truth, *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you;* in their heart the Lord 'sits first.' In which place it is fitly prefaced, *If I had been minded to go to them.* For because, as has been said, He doeth all things according to the counsel of His Will, not in answer to our desert, but because He is Himself so minded, the Lord enlightens us with His visitation. And so He both comes 'when He is minded,' and when He comes He 'sitteth first,' because both His Coming iv. Matt. 6, 33.

Job 29, 25. Allegorically.

in our heart is gratuitous, and the longing of the desire of Him in the thought of our heart is not the same as the rest of our desires. It goes on;

And when I sat as a king with an army standing round, nevertheless I was the Comforter of those that mourned.

v. 12. The Lord 'sits as a king in the heart,' because He rules the clamouring motions of the heart in our thinking. For in the soul which He inhabits, whilst He stirs up the dull, bridles the restless, inflames the cold, tempers the inflamed, softens down the hard, and binds up the loose, by this mere diversity of thoughts, a kind of 'army,' as it were, 'stands around Him.' Or surely He 'sitteth as King with an army standing around Him,' because that King, whilst He presides over the minds of the Elect, a host of virtues surround. And He too is 'the comforter of those that mourn,' by that promise, by which He says, *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.* And again; *I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you.* But the things which we have delivered concerning the Head of Holy Church, there is nothing hinders us if we should apply to the voice of the same Church as well. For in her the order of the teachers presides like a king, whom the crowd of her believing ones surrounds. Which same multitude of believers is also rightly called 'an army[1],' because it is unceasingly making ready day by day against the wars of temptations in the array of good works. The hearts of them that mourn Holy Church also comforts, whilst she considers the souls of the Elect borne down by the wofulness of the present pilgrimage, and gladdens them with the promise of the Eternal Country. Moreover she sees that the hearts of the faithful are stricken with divine dread, and those whom she sees have heard concerning God strict things that they should stand in fear, she likewise brings it to pass that they should also hear the gentleness of His pity, that they may have boldness.

Mat. 5, 4. John 16, 22.

[1] 'Exercitus.'

13. For thus does Holy Church mix hope and fear to her believers, touching the pity and justice of the Redeemer, in the continued course of her ministry; so that they may not either heedlessly rely on Mercy, nor hopelessly dread justice. For with the words of her Head she cheers up those that are

alarmed, saying, *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* And again, those that are presuming she affrights, when she says, *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.* Again, those that are in dread she cheers, saying, *Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.* But those presuming in themselves she affrights, when she says, *I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.* Those in dread she cheers when she says, *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me, and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My Hand.* But those presuming in themselves she affrights, saying, *And shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible they shall deceive the very Elect.* Those in dread she cheers, when she says, *But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.* The presuming she affrights, when she says, *Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?* The fearing she cheers, when He says to the robber, *To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise.* But she frightens the presuming, when Judas falls from the glory of the Apostleship into the pit of hell. Concerning whom it is said, in the laying down of a declaration, *I have chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil.* One in dread she cheers, when she says, *If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? Shall not that woman be greatly polluted? But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to Me, saith the Lord.* But one presuming she affrights, when she says, *Why criest thou upon thine affliction? thy sorrow is incurable.* One dreading she cheers, saying, *From this time at least call me, My father, thou art the guide of my virginity.* But the presuming one she frightens, saying, *Thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite.* One in dread she cheers, when she says, *Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall from you; for I am holy, saith the Lord; and I will not keep anger for ever.* But one presuming she affrights, when she debars her prophet from interceding, in the words, *Lift not up cry nor prayer for them; for I will not hear in the time of their crying to me, in the time*

Book XX.

Luke 12, 32. Mark 14, 38. Luke 10, 20. John 10, 27. 28. Matt. 24, 24. v. 13. Luke 18, 8. John 6, 70. Jer. 3, 1. Jer. 30, 15. Jer. 3, 4. Ez. 16, 3. Jer. 3, 12. Jer. 14, 11.

Job 29, 25. Allegd. Jer. 15, 1. *of their affliction: for though Moses and Samuel stood before me, my soul is not toward this people.* Thus her hearer's mind Holy Church both lifts up touching the loving-kindness of mercy, and disquiets touching the strictness of judgment, that in her preaching, whilst she rightly blends both, her Elect may neither presume on the score of righteousness set forth, nor despair on the ground of bygone iniquity.

Hist. 14. Yet this which he says, *And when I sat as a King with an army around, nevertheless I was a comforter of them that mourned,* it is necessary for us to know that even taken according to the history it may very greatly edify the reader, if he considers well how with good rulers both authoritativeness of ruling and loving-kindness of consoling are mixed together. For he says; *And when I sat as a King with an army around;* see the authoritativeness of governance; *nevertheless I was a comforter of them that mourned;* mark the service of pitifulness. For discipline or mercy is much bared, if the one be maintained without the other. But towards their subjects there ought to be in the hearts of rulers both mercy giving comfort in justice, and justice dealing wrath with pitifulness. It is hence that to the wounds of that half-dead man, who was carried by the Samaritan into the inn, there is both wine applied and oil, that by the wine the wounds should be bitten, and by the oil they should be soothed; that so every one who has the charge over the healing of wounds may by wine apply the biting of strictness, and by oil the softness of pitying; that by the wine what is putrid may be made clean, and by the oil what is to be healed may be soothed. Thus then gentleness is to be mixed with severity, and a certain qualifying process by both to be performed, that those under charge may not either be made sore by much sharpness, nor be relaxed by overmuch kindness. This surely that ark of the tabernacle betokens, in which along with the tables there are the rod and manna together; because when there is the knowledge of sacred Scripture in the breast of a good ruler, if there is the rod of severity, let there also be the manna of sweetness. Hence also David says, *Thy rod and Thy staff comforted me.* For we are stricken by the rod, and we are sustained by the staff. If then there be the strictness of the

Ps. 23, 4.

rod that it may smite, let there also be the comfort of the staff that it may sustain. So then let there be love, but not that softens, let there be vigour, but not that grates, let there be zeal, but not that storms to excess, let there be pitifulness that does not spare more than may be expedient. It is good to regard in the breast of Moses mercy united with severity. Let us see him loving pitifully and venting himself severely. Surely when the people of Israel before the eyes of God contracted an almost unpardonable offence, so that its Ruler heard, *Get thee down; thy people have sinned;* as though the Voice of God said to him, 'That people which has fallen in so great a sin, is henceforth no longer Mine,' and subjoined, *Now therefore let Me alone, that My fury may wax hot against them, and that I may destroy them, and I will make of thee a great nation;* once and again in behalf of the people that he was set over presenting himself as a bar to the assault of God in His indignation, he saith, *Either forgive them this sin; or if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written.* Let us reflect then with what bowels he loved that people, for whose life he begged to have himself 'blotted out of the book' of life. But yet this one who is tied and bound with such great love of his people, let us consider with what warmth of righteousness he is inflamed against its sins. For directly that by the first request he obtained pardon of the offence, that they should not be blotted out, coming to that people he says, *Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And there fell of the people that day about twenty three thousand men.* See, he who begged for the life of all even with his own death, killed the life of a few with the sword. Within he burned with the fire of love, without he was inflamed by the warmth of severity. So great was his pitifulness, that he did not hesitate to offer himself to death in the sight of the Lord in their behalf, such was his severity, that those whom he had feared to have stricken by divine power, he did himself strike with the sword of judgment; he so loved those whom he was set over, that in their behalf he did not even spare himself, and yet the

Book XX.

Ex. 32, 7.

Ex. 32, 27. 28.

Job 30, 1. Hist. persons offending, whom he loved, he so persecuted, that even when the Lord spared them, he laid them low. Both ways a forcible ambassador, both ways an incomparable mediator; the cause of the people he pleaded before God by prayers, the cause of God he pleaded before the people with swords. Within loving he withstood the wrath of God by entreating, without venting himself he consumed sin by smiting. He succours all quickly by the death of a few being manifested. Therefore Almighty God listened the sooner to His faithful servant dealing in behalf of the people, because He saw what he was of himself about to do upon the people in behalf of God. In the governance therefore of the people Moses blended both, that neither should discipline be lacking to mercy, nor mercy to discipline. Hence here also it is said answerably to either excellency; *And when I sat as a King with an army around, nevertheless I was a comforter of them that mourned.* For to 'sit with an army around' is the vigour and discipline of governance, but 'to comfort the hearts of them that mourn' is the ministration of pitifulness. But because in the midst of all this it is necessary that the line of interpre-

Alleg. tation should fall back to the spiritual meaning, Holy Church when borne down by her adversaries in the last times, calls to mind the laws of her past governance, calls to mind too what great benefits of pitifulness she displayed to them that were afflicted. Whose discipline and mercy are then derided by the light of mind. And hence it is added;

Chap. xxx. 1. *But now they that are younger than I have me in derision.*

vi. 15. All heretics when compared to the age of the Church Universal are fitly called 'younger' in time, because *they* went forth out of her, not *she* out of them. Whence it is

1 John 2, 19. rightly also said by John; *They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.* For 'they that are younger in time deride Holy Church,' when they that went out from her, set at nought the words of her instruction; concerning whom it is further added;

Whose fathers I would have disdained to set with the dogs of my flock.

Who is the ' flock' of Holy Church saving the multitude of the faithful? Or who else are called ' the dogs' of this flock, but the holy Teachers, who became the guardians of those believers? Which same whilst in behalf of their Lord they cried aloud, given up to daily and nightly watchings, uttered, so to say, loud barks of preaching. Concerning whom it is said to that Church by the Psalmist, *The tongue of Thy dogs from the enemies by the same.* Since there are some that being recalled from the worshipping of idols are made the preachers of God. So ' the tongue of the dogs' of the Church goeth forth from enemies, because the Gentiles that are converted the Lord makes even preachers. Whence the slowness of the Jews, who refused to speak in God's behalf by the Prophet upbraiding them is made matter of blame, where he says, *they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark.* Book XX. Ps. 68, 23. Is. 56, 10.

16. Now we speak of the fathers of Heretics meaning those whom we style ' Heresiarchs,' by whose evil preaching, i. e. by the seed of speaking, the peoples following them were begotten in error. So then Holy Church ' disdains to set the fathers' of heretics ' with the dogs of her flock,' because the founders of erring tenets on trying she rejects, and contemns to number them among the true Fathers. Which persons though they seemed to have recalled some from the erroneousness of heathenism, to have trained the practices of some to the doing what is right, yet for this that they did not think right things of God, she does not ' set them with the dogs of the flock,' because she does not rank them with right preachers. For it is plain that Arius, Photinus, Macedonius, Nestorius, Eutyches, Dioscorus, Severus, and numbers like to these, endeavoured by teaching and persuading to appear fathers. But their errors the Holy Church Universal trying with strict severity, does not ' number those persons among the keepers of her flock,' whom she condemns as breaking up the unity of that flock. Of which same it is said to the Ephesians by the voice of Paul, *For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.* And because it sometimes happens that heretics in proportion as they fall Acts 20, 29.

Job 30, 2. Allegg. away more into the erroneousness of misbelief, guard themselves the more fully in outward practising, so that they may appear to do great things above the rest of the world, the Holy Church Universal sets at nought all their works, which she observes do not come forth by the authority of faith. Whence also it is rightly added by the voice of blessed Job,

Ver. 2. *The power of whose hands was nothing to me, and of life itself they were accounted unworthy.*

vii. 17. 'Power in the hand' is greatness in practising. But 'the power of the hands' of Heretics is reckoned 'as nothing to' Holy Church, because she sees that, the true faith being lost, whatsoever they do it is of no merit. For the charity of God and our neighbour they forsake, who both imagine what is false concerning God, and by wrangling are separated from their neighbours. But 'the strength of the hands' without charity the great preacher bears witness is of no 1 Cor. 13, 3. avail, in that he says, *And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.* But sometimes Heretics perform signs and miracles as well, but in order that they may here receive back the rewards of their chastening and abstinence, i. e. the praises, which they go after. Matt. 7, 22. And hence it is said by the voice of the Redeemer, *Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name, and in Thy Name have cast out devils, and in Thy Name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.* By which same sentence what is there given to be understood, but that in man it is the humbleness of charity and not the signs of miraculous virtues that ought to be revered? Whence Holy Church now, even if there be any miracles of heretics performed, sets it at nought, because she sees that these are no proof of holiness. Since the way to prove holiness is not to perform miracles, but to love every man as one's self; and concerning God to think what is true, and of his fellow-creature to think better things than of himself. For that true power lies in love, and not in the manifesting of a miracle, 'Truth'

shews, Who says, *By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.* For He Who says not, 'in this shall it be known that ye are My disciples, if ye shall perform miraculous signs,' but Who saith, 'if ye have love one to another,' plainly proves that it is not miracles but charity alone that proves the true servants of God. So the witness to the heavenly discipleship is the gift of brotherly charity. Which same love, because all heretics refuse to have, whilst they are divided from the Unity of the Church Universal, it is justly said concerning them; *the strength of whose hands was nothing to me.* And because to these same signs, that they set forth, they do not accord themselves by any humility, it is rightly added, *And of life itself they were accounted unworthy.* Or indeed, all heretics Holy Church declares unworthy of life itself, for this reason, because under the Name of Christ, they fight against the Name of Christ. Of whom it is yet further added; Book XX. John 13, 35.

Barren by want and hunger.

18. All heretics, whilst in sacred Revelation they make it their aim to dive into secrets of God beyond what they are capable of, by their hunger become barren. For they do not seek those things, whereby they may train themselves to humility, may order their ways in tranquillity, keep patience, shew forth long suffering, but those alone which may prove them learned and talkers; they aim to know those things, by which they may seem to be in a special manner instructed. For they very often treat with boldness of the nature of the Divine Being, whilst, wretched as they are, they know not their own selves. And so they become 'barren by want and hunger,' because they desire to dive into those things, by which they should not bring forth the buddings of a good life. For the things which they dive into are beyond themselves. And whilst they make for that which they are unable to comprehend, they neglect to acquaint themselves with those things, by which they might have been instructed. Which same boldness of theirs the great Preacher rightly checks, saying, *not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly.* Hence Solomom says, *Set bounds to thine own wisdom.* Hence again he says, viii. Rom. 12, 3. Prov. 23, 4.

Job 30, 2. Allegg. *Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.* For the sweetness of spiritual meaning he who seeks to eat beyond what he contains, even what he had eaten he 'vomiteth;' because whilst he seeks to make out things above, beyond his powers, even the things that he had made out aright, he forfeits. Prov. 25, 16. v. 27. Hence he says again; *As for one to eat much honey is not good, so he that would search out Majesty shall be crushed with glory.* For the glory of the Invisible Creator, which when searched into with moderation lifts us up, being dived into beyond our powers bears us down. Therefore heretics, because in proportion as they aim to be more completely filled by sublime perception, so much the more entirely they become empty, have it rightly said concerning them, *barren by want and hunger.* Since by unbounded attempts the more they go after the knowledge of heavenly acquaintanceship, the more they lose it.

19. But, on the other hand, they that in Holy Church are truly humble, and truly instructed, are taught touching heavenly mysteries, both some things when viewed to understand, and some things not understood to reverence, that so what they understand they may hold with reverence, and what they do not as yet understand they may look forward to with humility. Whence it is said to us by Moses, that in eating the lamb, *that which remaineth of it* we should *burn with fire;* for we 'eat the lamb,' when in understanding many particulars of the Lord's human Nature, we deposit them in the belly of the mind. Wherefrom there are some things left to us, which cannot be eaten; because many particulars still remain concerning Him, which can by no means be understood. Which same nevertheless are to be 'consumed with fire,' because the things which we are unable to understand concerning Him, we reserve with humility for the Holy Spirit. Which same humility very often reveals even those things to the perceptions of the Elect, which appeared to be things impossible to be understood. For the froward minds of heretics, whilst they proudly attribute understanding to themselves, as it were presume to deliver fixed decisions even touching what is unknown. Whence it comes to pass, that the self-elation itself which lifts them up in themselves within, should without drive them off from the truth, and

Ex. 12, 10.

that in the declarations of God they should hardly even comprehend the outward things, who thought that they had in an especial manner gone to the bottom of spiritual secrets. Whence it is also added here; Book XX.

Ver. 3, 4. *Who gnawed in solitude, being scurvy with calamity and misery, and chewed herbs and the barks of trees.*

ix. 20. That is wont to be 'gnawed,' which cannot be eaten. Now heretics because they apply themselves to make out Scripture by their own power, assuredly never can comprehend it, which same whilst they do not make out, they, as it were, do not eat. And because, not being aided by grace from on high, they are unable to eat it, they as it were 'gnaw' it with certain efforts. Since they handle it outwardly, when indeed they endeavour but do not attain to the interior parts of it. Which same because they are separated from the society of the Church Universal, are mentioned as gnawing not any where, but 'in solitude.' To which same 'solitude' that the false teachers draw their followers, Truth long before forewarned, saying, *If they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth.* And these are rightly recorded as 'scurvy with affliction and misery,' because they are despicable at once by the destructiveness of their practices, and the badness of their perceptions. Who do also 'eat herbs and the barks of trees,' because being kept off by the bar of self-exaltation, they are unable to perceive in sacred Revelation what is great and interior, but with difficulty discover therein a few things that are tender and exterior. Since by 'herbs' the plainer statements, and by 'the barks of trees' the exterior declarations of the Fathers are betokened. Those then who seek to know those things, by which they may not at all *be* learned, but seem to be, whilst in the sacred volumes they do not from the heart's core search out the force of charity towards God and our neighbour, are as it were 'fed by the herb and the bark,' because they are either the lowest or the outer things which nourish the souls of those who carry themselves proudly. Or surely to 'eat herbs' is touching Holy Scripture to observe the least precepts, and to disregard the greater ones. Whom Truth rightly rebukes, saying, *Woe unto you, Scribes and* Mat. 24, 26. Mat. 23, 23.

Job 30, 4. Allegg. *Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the Law.* Who do also 'eat the barks of trees,' because there are some who in the sacred volumes respect the outside of the letter only, nor keep in safety any thing belonging to the spiritual meaning, whereas they imagine that there is nothing more in the words of God, but that which they may hear on the outside. Which persons nevertheless the passion of vain glory possesses in all their errors, and the thirst after honour holds them captives, and generally by the very things that they speak they seek after nothing else but earthly profits. Rom. 16, 18. Concerning whom it is said by Paul, *For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly.* Whence too it is rightly subjoined;

And juniper roots for their meat.

x. 21. For the juniper tree has prickles instead of leaves, for so bristly is that which they put forth, that like to thorns it is able to prick the person handling it. Now a thorn is all sorts of sin; because whilst it draws into self-gratification, as it were by pricking it wounds the soul. Whence it is Ps. 32, 4. spoken by the voice of one righteous and penitent, *I was turned in my calamity, while the thorn is broken*, surely because the mind is turned to lamenting, that the prick of sin may be broken by repenting. But in another translation, the thorn is described not as 'broken[1],' but 'fixed[2],' which same is not at variance with the same sense, because the mind of the penitent is brought to sorrow when the sin that has been committed is retained fixed fast in the recollection. What then is there denoted by the 'root of the juniper' saving avarice, from which the thorns of all the sins are produced? Concerning which it is said by Paul, 1 Tim. 6, 10. *For the love of money is the root of all evil.* For that springs up covertly in the mind, and brings forth openly the prickles of all sin in the practice. Which same prickles arising from this root the great preacher immediately implies, when he subjoins, *Which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.* For he who spoke of 'many sorrows' made known as it were the prickles arising from this root. So by 'junipers' we understand sins, but by 'the root of junipers' what else do

[1] 'confringi'
[2] 'configi'

we understand, but avarice, i. e. the material of sins? So then because heretics in their words generally go after external gains alone, yet are not ignorant that they make up what is wrong, but do not abandon the preachings of error, whilst they wish to receive their emoluments as teachers, it is well said of them now by the voice of the holy man, *and juniper roots for their meat*, because whilst they think of avarice with all the faculties of their minds, they are as it were fed by that nourishment, wherefrom assuredly the prickles of sins ensuing are used to be produced. Which persons if ever in sacred Revelation they seemingly discover things with sagacity, which while they do not understand, they fancy make for their statements, they directly scatter these vociferating them to their wretched hearers, whom they covet not the souls of but the substance. Whence it is fitly brought in next, Book XX.

Ver. 5. *Who carrying these same off from the valleys, when they found each of them, ran to them with clamour.*

22. They 'carry them off from the valleys,' because with a high spirit they gather them from the lowly sayings of the Fathers. Which same whilst they exult to have found making for their cause, they run to them with outcries, because every thing that they have a perception of, by the appetite of praise they strive to cry abroad to the ears of men. It goes on; xi.

Ver. 6. *They shall dwell in the desert places of the torrents, and in the caves of the earth, or upon the ground.*

23. We give the name of 'torrents' to the brooks, that are gathered by the winter rains, which likewise at certain seasons are dried up. Thus with justice the framers of wrong doctrines are called 'torrents;' because being cold to the warmth of charity, they grow to a height in the deadness of the winter season; because they do not flow out with perpetual fulness, but by the pleadings of Catholics, as by summer suns, are dried up. And indeed the fabricators of wrong doctrines springing up against Holy Church, are already made an end of by the heat of truth, yet notwithstanding the things which they taught their disciples do not cease to maintain and to defend. Thus then they that follow the errors of those persons 'dwell in the desert places of torrents,' i. e. xii.

Job 30, 6. ALLEG. put their trust in the preaching of those, whose effusions are already by the answering and reasoning of Catholics dried up. Now what else do we take 'the caves of the earth' for, but the hidden preachings of heretics? For heretics meet together in secret conclaves in such sort, that the reverence, which they cannot invest their erring belief with by reason, they may by concealment, and that to weak souls the speech of pervertedness may appear more to be treated with awe in proportion as it is secret. Hence in Solomon the woman as a type of heresy persuades, saying, *Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.* Which self-same secret preachings 'Truth' abhors, saying, *Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not.* And again; *Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth; Behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the East, and shineth even unto the West: so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.* So then that is 'in the secret chambers' there, which here is phrased in 'caves.' Thus heretics 'dwell in caves,' because they generally conceal their error by preachings in secret; that in the degree that they forbear to shew themselves to the more learned and wiser sort, they may the more irresistibly draw to them the uninstructed. Whence also the words are rightly brought in next; *Or upon the gravel.* For we call by the name of 'gravel' those very little stones which the water of the river draws along. Accordingly, the teachers of perverted doctrines 'dwell upon the gravel,' because they draw after them those minds of men which are not established with any stedfastness of gravity, which the streams of errors are as it were ever carrying from place to place. And hence the great preacher, whereas he desired that his hearers should not be led by the chances of time, but that they might be established by firm gravity, charged them, saying, *That we henceforth be no more like children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine.* Thus Holy Church, being borne down by her adversaries for a space, when she sees the bold minds of those in error insulting over her, recalls to remembrance what the behaviour of those was, saying, *They shall dwell in the desert places of torrents, and in the caves of the*

Prov. 9, 17.

Mat. 24, 23. 26, 27.

Eph. 4, 14.

earth, or upon the gravel. For because their wrong preaching, the fire of charity being gone, gained power by coldness of feeling, surely it 'dwelt in the desert places of torrents.' And because it was not open and at large, it 'lay hid' in caves. And because it held the people not fixed but lightly moved, it remained not upon the rock but 'upon the gravel.' Concerning which it is yet further added; Book XX.

Ver. 7. *Who rejoiced in the midst of the like, and reckoned there were delights under brambles.*

24. What do we understand by the name of 'brambles,' but those 'piercings[1]' of sins, which we have already described above. Now because froward minds delight in wickednesses, which they should have bewailed, all heretics uplift themselves with vain joy in proportion as they gain power for worse acts; and they 'reckon there are delights under the brambles,' because they lift up the froward mind to joy, from the same cause that they bear the thorns of sins. For if ever they have been able to draw any one to their error, they plume themselves in glee; and by the same act, whereby they are daily heaping to themselves sins, even by ruining others, they exult that they are as it were leaders to righteousness. And so it is well said; *Who rejoiced amongst the like, and reckoned that there are delights under brambles.* For they drag all that they are able to their own destruction; and to be under sins, or to add offences to offences, they imagine their heaping up a superabundance of virtuous acquirements. xiii. [1] §. 21.

Ver. 8. *They were children of fools, yea, children of base men; and in the earth not appearing at all.*

25. That is to say, the children of those, who were the masters of errors. So they are called 'children,' not as engendered by the seed, but by the imitating of those, who by teaching what is wrong were 'fools' in respect of ignorance, and by living wicked lives 'base men' in respect of conduct. Who are not allied to our Redeemer by any relationship of wisdom, or by any of life. Concerning which it is said by the voice of Solomon in commendation of Holy Church, *Her husband is noble in the gates.* So these, because they followed the froward examples of those going astray, were recorded as being 'the children of fools and of xiv. Prov. 31, 23.

Job 30, 8. Allegor. base men.' Now it is rightly subjoined, *and on the earth not appearing at all.* Because whilst they aim to appear something here, surely from the land of the living they are made outcasts.

26. But this which we have delivered in a type of heretics, nothing is at all in the way, if we understand it as well of persons froward and carnal, though set in the right faith. For neither does Holy Church account those only adversaries to her, who, as placed without, dissent from her faith, but those also who by living amiss inwardly stifle her life. So then let her, afflicted with the wofulness of adversity coming down upon her, survey how in the season of her prosperity, by the wickedness of evil-doers living within her even she was burthened. Let her consider that in due of the deserts of some, the life of all was not unjustly disturbed in her, and let her say, *Who gnawed in solitude, scurvy with affliction and misery.* As I before said in the first part of this work, the solitude of the interior is sometimes used to be understood in respect of the excellency of contemplation. But in this place, where 'solitude' is mentioned in the way of reproach, what else is there demonstrated but a barrenness of goodness? And hence, under the type of Judæa, Jeremiah Lam. 1, 1. mourns over the soul of the sinner, saying, *How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people!* But when it is said by blessed Job respecting the evil-doers, *they gnawed in solitude,* it is well to look at that also which is delivered by the Ps. 72, 9. Psalmist, *His enemies shall lick the dust.*

27. For there are two sorts of men that lend themselves to their own ambition, i. e. one which always employs the flatteries of the tongue to serve to avarice, another which is bent on robbery by open force. For we 'gnaw' when we wear away any thing outwardly with strong effort. For there is 'licking' when that which cannot be eaten with ease is tasted by the lightness of the tongue being pressed upon it. All persons then who even under a guise of faith live wickedly, who long after what belongs to another, but are not any way able to seize upon the object that they long after, but try by flattering speeches, and as it were by the softening of sweetness, to carry off the things coveted, what else do they save 'lick the ground?' because the several

things of earth, which they cannot by power, they strive to make away with by the softness of the tongue. But they who are sustained in this world by any degree of power, and whilst coveting the things of others, scorn indeed to cozen by deceit, because they are able even by unjust strength to fulfil what they have a mind for, the thing that they long for these persons do not 'lick' but 'gnaw;' because they demolish the life of their fellow-creatures by the forcibleness of power as by the effect of teeth. So then let Holy Church regard the true riches of the Eternal Country, let her behold the throng of the citizens Above, let her discern in her Elect Children the culture of the mind, and the excellencies of countless virtues, and from these let her recall the eye of the mind to the life of the wicked, which is made void of all goodness, and by comparison with them let her see how and in what way that life is destitute of all virtuous attainments, because it has abandoned the things on high, and coveted those beneath. Let her see how very often that thing which he longs for, if perchance he has power, he even seizes by violence. Let her see that she has long been subject to such persons as set within her pale, and that by their offences she has come even to the very jeopardy and hurts of the good too, and let her say, *Who gnawed in solitude.* As though she complained openly, saying, 'The things of others they would not gnaw, even by seizing them by violence, except they themselves first remained in their own interior solitary, and bare of the culture of virtues.' But she rightly explains the kind and sort of those, saying, *Scurvy with affliction and misery.* For unhealthy flesh, if it be overlooked to be heedfully taken care of, is by foulness growing over it worse pressed with disease, and whilst to the misfortune of sickness the wretchedness of neglect is superadded, heavier inconvenience is undergone by scurf arising.

28. Therefore Human Nature having been created aright, but having sunk into disease by the demerit of its own will, it fell into utter overthrow, because being pressed by countless necessities, it found nought in this life save that whereby it should be beaten down; but whereas those same necessities of our nature we generally minister to beyond what is advisable, and overlook the care of the soul, by the wretched-

Job 30, 8. ALLEG. ness of neglect we add to our infirmity the foulness of sin. For the necessities of nature are such as to have this in them fraught with the greatest danger, that often there is no discerning therein, what there is done relating to them in the aim at usefulness, and what in the evil of self-gratification. For very frequently occasion of beguilement being met with, whilst we render the things due to necessity we are doing service to the evil of self-gratification, if our self-excusing cloaks itself with the veil of infirmity before the eyes of discernment, and as it were hides itself under the countenance of discharging the useful. But to let loose the frailty of our nature by neglect is nothing else than to add misery to affliction, and by that misery to redouble the foulness of the vices. Whence holy men, in every thing they do, discriminate with the most earnest aim, that the frailty of their nature exact not from them more than is owed, and that under the cloak of necessity there grow not up in them the evil of gratification. For they undergo one thing from infirmity, and another thing from the prompting of temptation, and being appointed as a kind of most equitable umpires between necessity and pleasure, they lift up the one by comforting, and bridle the other by keeping down. Whence it comes to pass, that even if they are exposed to the affliction of their infirmity, yet they never descend from neglect to the foulness of misery. For this mere thing, to be in affliction, is to be subject to the necessities of nature from the frailty of flesh still liable to corruption. Which same necessities he longed to get quit of, who said, *Deliver me from my necessities.* For he knew that, for the most part, the sins of the pleasures break forth by occasion of necessities, and that he might not of his own will commit aught unlawful, he was busy to have that itself plucked up which he was subject to unwillingly in the root[a].

Ps. 25, 17.

29. But on the other hand, the evil-minded take delight in those necessities of their corrupt state, because they force them back to serve the occasion of gratifications. For while they minister to nature by recruiting their bodies with food, through the gratification of the palate they are swelled out in the glutting of delight. When they seek clothing for

[a] An example of this case is found in St. Augustine's Confessions, B. x. §. 43—47.

covering the limbs, they look out not only for things that may cover, but also may uplift, and against the numbness of cold not only what may defend by thickness, but likewise delight by softness; not only what may soothe the touch by softness, but also beguile the eyes by the colour. So then, to turn occasion of necessity to the use of pleasure, what other thing is it but to join the foulness of misery to his affliction? Thus let the Church, being borne down in the season of adversity, call to mind those by whose deserts she undergoes these things, and let her say, *Who gnawed in solitude, scurvy with affliction and misery.* They indeed would not be made foul by affliction, if they did not superadd to inherent necessities the misery of gratifications. Which same necessities we have earned by the offence of the first parent. But they who add misery to their affliction, from the torture of punishment, break forth into augmentations of guilt. But would that such persons, whilst they scorn to be changed for the better, did things wrong in such a way as not to proffer them to others as well. Would that their own death only were enough for them, and that by their baneful persuasions they did not kill another's life likewise. For they grudge others being what they are not, they grieve for others to obtain the thing that they lose; for if by chance they perceive any good points springing up in the acts of others, they directly pluck them up with the hand of mischievous reviling. Whence too it follows, *And they did eat herbs and the barks of trees.*

30. For what is denoted by 'herbs,' but the life of those beginning well tender and close to the ground? and what by the barks of trees, but the outward deeds of those who henceforth seek after things aloft? For bad men, when they see persons beginning what is right, either by deriding or as if counselling them, offer opposition. But when they now think with themselves that certain persons are making way to the highest things, because they cannot wholly and entirely scatter to the winds their advancements, they divert those persons from some of their deeds. Thus then to 'eat herbs and the barks of trees,' is by pestilent persuasions as by a kind of teeth of their evil-mindedness to scatter to nought, whether the aims of those beginning aright, or the doings of

Job 30, 6. Allegor. persons now henceforth after the manner of trees making towards that which is above. The children of perdition 'eat herbs,' when by scoffing they consume the beginnings of the frail sort. Likewise they 'eat the barks of trees,' when with the hand of evil counsel they withdraw from the life of those growing rightly the covering of good deeds. Now these latter they strip like trees in particular actions, but those because like herbs they drag whilst despising them, they as it were eat what they tread under them. The strength of some now rising on high they in part make away with, but the tenderness of some even still placed below they utterly break in pieces. So then let him say, *they eat herbs and the barks of trees*, because by wicked mockings in some they broke up piecemeal external deeds, and in some hearts in hope growing lively.

31. Or surely to 'eat herbs' is to copy some things light and tender belonging to the ancient Fathers. Whilst to 'eat the barks of trees' is to practise their deeds so far as the outside, but in these same works not to maintain a right intention. For there are some persons who, whereas they cannot obtain the glory of the present world by that world's courses of conduct, seek after a semblance of sanctity, assume the garb of reverence, long to appear imitators of the old Fathers, and some few things indeed, little and light, they do employ themselves upon, but their strong things, and such as come forth from the root of charity alone, they are indifferent to imitate. These truly 'eat herbs,' because they overlook what is great, and are filled with what is worthless. Yet very often they put in execution even some deeds seemingly more vigorous, but they do not hold a right intention in those same deeds. To which persons surely to 'eat the barks of trees' is to take to them the outward acts of the Elect, and not to have a good intention in good acts. For whilst for the sake of human applause they search out right deeds, but are indifferent to imitate the heart of those doing rightly, they are filled 'by the barks of trees' alone. For with all the desire they seek after the glory or abundance of the present life. Whence too it is rightly subjoined, *And the root of junipers was their meat.*

32. For being set within by faith, whilst they for the most

part lend themselves to thoughts of avarice, they as it were 'eat' that, whereby in the final close of life the roughnesses of punishments are put forth. Which persons, while they do not long after the fruitage of divine revelation, but make themselves subservient for the going after things temporal, are never filled with the bread of wheat, but with the 'root of the juniper.' For the mere things springing up from what is beneath and lowest engross them, that they may prick them afterwards after the manner of the juniper by the hardness of recompensing, as by the sharpness of leaves. For whilst they despise God here, they are never made sensible what great evil it is that they do. For still they are 'eating the root of the juniper,' but how sharp the branches of this root are they do not give heed; because verily bad conduct now as it were in the root gives delight in sin, but afterwards as it were in the branches it pricks in punishment. Where also it is well subjoined; *Who, carrying these same off from the valleys, when they found each one, did run thereto with clamour.*

33. In comparison surely with things above, all the present life is a 'valley.' But these, because they know not to contemplate the heights of mountains, i. e. the strong deeds of the Saints, are always busied in the lowest gratification as in 'the valleys,' and when they find any gain, even of a slight acquisition, they run with clamouring, because they strive even by wrangling to make off with this, for 'upon each being found in the valley to run with clamour,' is on the occasions of cases arising to wrangle even for small payment. Now it very often happens that him, whom good conduct exhibits as holy, occasion of earthly advantage springing up puts to the proof. For you may see persons already employed on what is lofty, already in the practice of abstinence, already in the work of instruction, following after the patterns of the fathers that went before; but when they suddenly find the gain of the present life, as the fruit of the valley, they 'run thereto with clamour;' because the quiet of overlaid sanctity being broken through they spring forth to that.

34. It may be too that by 'herbs and the barks of trees' not only the deeds of the good are meant, as has been said before, but consolations and blessings in this life. For oftentimes

Job 30, 6. Allegg. Almighty God, when He enriches His Elect with interior gifts, uplifts them with external honours as well. And while He renders them objects of honour by advancing them above others, He exhibits them the wider as objects of imitation; and sometimes the evil-minded despise indeed the life of those, but long to attain their good success in this world. And so because they seek here below the flatteries of transitory comfort, they 'eat herbs;' because in their thoughts they dwell on the external glory of these persons, they 'chew the barks of trees;' and because in all these they minister to avarice alone with the entire bent of their mind, they are filled with the 'root of the juniper.' All which things they 'carry off from the valleys,' because from love of this low corruptible life they are made to burn with boundless lusts. And 'when they find each one, they run thereto with clamours,' because surely of the holy Fathers, whose merits they never seek to acquire, they are busy to lay hold of the posts and governments, and when they very frequently cannot attain these by quiet means, they even try it by bursting asunder the peacefulness of concord.

35. And for this that these are widely separated from the conduct of the Fathers going before, it is rightly subjoined; *They dwelled in the desert places of torrents, and in the caves of the earth, or upon the gravel.* For on the side of good we rightly take the 'torrents' for the holy preachers, who whilst in the present life they flow into us by divine effusions, are as it were collected by a concourse of waters in the winter season. Who also withdraw themselves on the summer sun appearing, because when the light of the Eternal Country shines forth, they will cease to preach. 'The desert places of these torrents' are the benefits of the life of time. For these they abandon, and betake themselves to the obtaining of heavenly gains. But all these that 'torrent' had forsaken who said; *For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung.* Phil. 3, 8. But because the minds of the wicked seek to obtain those things in this life, which the righteous abandon despising them, they are related to 'dwell in the desert places of the torrents.' For those things which are unworthy of the Saints, those same long to win as great. But the 'caves of the earth' are wicked thoughts, in which

they bury themselves from the eyes of their fellow-creatures. For as they are evil, they shun being seen by men, and whilst they pretend themselves something else than what they are, they conceal themselves in the lurking places of their conscience, as 'in caves of the earth,' which persons would not do all these things, unless they were hopeless of an eternal and substantial life, unless they set their mind in this uncertainty of the temporal state. Whence it is well added, *Or upon the gravel.* BOOK XX.

36. For the 'gravel' is the present life, which by the mere failure of mutability, as by the impulse of a river, is unceasingly being brought to its end. Hence to 'dwell upon the gravel' is to attach one's self to the tide of the present life, and there to set the bent of the mind, where it cannot stablish the step by standing firmly. There is another circumstance 'in gravel,' which ought in no wise to be passed over in silence, namely, that when the foot is set upon the top of it, it slips by the mere rolling tendency thereof, and is made to roll down to the bottom. From which circumstance the life of the wicked is in nothing at variance, because whilst for love of the world they set themselves to do some things lawful and respectable, they in a manner set the foot flat upon the top, but suddenly the foot slips to the bottom, because their course of conduct, whilst it ever seeks after more, descends even to what is wicked and unlawful. So then, when Holy Church meets with the crosses of this period, let her in remembrance have recourse to the life of the carnal, whom even in her prosperity she bore as adversaries to her, and by whose deserts it is that she suffers these things let her see and know, saying, *They dwelled in the desert places of torrents, and in caves of the earth, and upon the gravel.* For because they are bared of the teaching of the Fathers, they are related to 'dwell in the desert places of the torrents;' because they cover themselves up in the hidden thoughts of the heart, they are related to 'dwell in caves of the earth;' whilst because they desire to fix their aim in the changeableness of the present state of being, they are related to 'dwell upon the gravel.' But would that such, seeing that sins when they tempt they have no mind to do violence to, even after they have been committed,

Job 20, 7. Allegor. cleansed them away by weeping: would that at all events, when done, they acquainted themselves with their evil deeds, and applied to the barren fig-tree the basket of dung, i. e. to the unfruitful soul the richness of lamenting.

37. But the mind of man has for the most part this thing proper to it, that as soon as ever it falls into transgression, it is still further removed from the knowledge of self. For this very evil, that it commits, inserts itself to the soul as a bar before the eye of reason. Whence it comes to pass, that the soul, being first encompassed by voluntary darkness, afterwards does not any longer even know the good it should seek. For the more it attaches itself to evil things, the less does it apprehend the good ones that it loses. Since the light of truth, because it minutely tries the offences of lost sinners, in the same degree that it is neglected when had, so does it, judging rigidly, allow it to be, that not even when lost it should be sought back, and when it is banished from the act, it departs from the perception; that that whereof the face, as it were, is slighted in practice, should now no longer have its very hinder parts appear in the remembrance. Thus, hence it is that lost sinners, whilst subject to sins to be lamented, rejoice; concerning whom it is said by Solomon,

Prov. 2, 14. *Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the worst things.* Hence it is that occasions of lamentations they go through dancing; hence it is that the business of their death they carry on laughing. Whence here also it is fitly subjoined,

Ver. 7. *Who rejoiced in the midst of the like, and reckoned there were delights under the brambles.*

xv. 38. 'They rejoice in the midst of the like,' because, surely, they give heed to the transitory things which they receive, and neglect to look at the lasting blessings which they lose. And whilst they are on fire with the love of things temporal, they are willingly ignorant of the true joy. Which same if they earnestly sought to acquaint themselves with, how greatly the delights which they seek after are to be wept for, they would see. But, while they are unconcerned to know what are better, they choose those alone for themselves, as the highest, which flatter the eyes in the visible by a fleeting beguilement. That is to say, they fix fast their heart, following after the visible, and rejoice so much the more

outwardly, in proportion as they are without the remembrance of themselves inwardly. Yet, generally, there are mixed with their joys calamities, and by the actual things, by which they are filled with pride, they are scourged. For neither can they, without grievous inconveniences of anxieties, either seek when not possessed, or retain when sought, the temporal things that they desire; among their equals aim at superior glory; from inferiors exact respect beyond what is meet, and to superiors shew forth the same less than they ought; for the most part display the mastery by masterfulness; ever do what is wicked, and yet, that they may not have the credit of wickedness, guard themselves with dread. All these things surely sting the wretched persons, but those same stings they do not feel, from being overcome by the mere love of the things of time. And hence it is rightly said now, *And reckoned there were delights under the brambles;* because, being closely encompassed by the enjoyments of sins, from the affecting of the present life, how sharp the things they are that they undergo they are not aware.

39. Therefore they 'rejoice,' but 'under brambles;' because they delight in earthly things indeed, but yet, whilst they are unable to manage those same things of time without trouble, the wretched persons are stung by that same care which they are pressed by. They continue 'under the brambles,' and this very thing they account delight, because they at once endure hardships indeed from the love of the present life, but yet, being bound about by the absorption of over-great desire, they account the trouble of that endurance to be pleasure. Hence Jeremiah, rightly taking upon himself the likeness of all human conduct, complains in lament, saying, *He has made me drunken with wormwood.* For as we have already said before in a part above, any one drunk knows nothing what he is undergoing. But he that is made 'drunk with wormwood,' both has the thing that he has taken bitter, and yet does not understand that same bitterness which he is filled with. So the race of man, being by the right judgment of God left to themselves in their pleasures, and by those same pleasures consigned to voluntary sufferings, is 'drunk with wormwood;' because both these are bitter things which it endures for the love of

Lam. 3, 15.

Job 30, 7. Alleg. this life, and yet that same bitterness, by the blindness of concupiscence, as by the insensibility of drunkenness, it remains ignorant of. For thirsting after the glory of the world, whilst it finds instead thereof numberless tribulations, what it drinks is bitter. But because it took this too eagerly, from mere drunkenness it is not now able to discern the evil of that bitterness. For bad men, for the sake of the glory of this world, love tribulations even, and on account of it willingly lend themselves to all toils, and most devotedly submit their necks to the yoke of heavy labours. Which is well described by Hosea whilst prophesying, under the likeness of Ephraim, saying, *And Ephraim is a heifer that is taught to love threshing.* For a heifer accustomed to the labours of threshing, very often, when loosed, returns even not forced to the same customariness of labour. So the mind of the wicked being devoted to the services of this world, and accustomed to the wearyings of temporal things, even if it be allowed to be freely at liberty to itself, yet is eager to submit itself to earthly pains and toils, and seeks the usage of a wretched way of life, 'the threshing' of labour, that it should not be acceptable, even if it were allowable, to give over the yoke of worldly servitude. Which same yoke the Lord loosed from the neck of the disciples, when He said, *And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness;* and straightway added, *and cares of this life; and so that day come upon you unawares.* And again, *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.* What is it for the Lord to call Himself 'meek and lowly' in preceptorship, save leaving behind the difficulties for exercising self-exaltation, to point out some plain ways of living well? But because the minds of the wicked are more pleased by what is harsh in self-exalting than by what is gentle in mildness and humility, they 'suppose there are delights under brambles.' For from love of the world they are ready to bear what is hard as things soft and delightful, whilst they try in this life to lay hold of the topmost pinnacles of affairs.

Hos. 10, 11. 'al. 'from usage' Luke 21, 34. Mat. 11, 28.

40. The Lord bids ceasing from the labours of the world,

He prompts the sweetness of holy tranquillity, and yet the frenzied mind of the wicked is more rejoiced to obtain what is harsh in the carnal way than to hold what is mild in the spiritual way. It is more fed by the bitterness of wearisomeness than by the sweetness of tranquillity. Which the Israelitish people openly shews us in itself, which same, whilst it received the refreshment of manna from above, lusted after the flesh-pots, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, from Egypt. For what is denoted by the 'manna,' but the food of grace, having a sweet savour, given from Above for the refreshment of the interior life to persons rightly free? And what by the 'flesh-pots,' saving carnal works, which are with difficulty to be dressed by the toils of tribulations, as by fires? What by 'melons,' but earthly sweets? What by 'leeks and onions,' which those who eat very often shed tears, excepting the hardness of the present life, which is both gone through by the lovers of it not without mourning, and notwithstanding is loved with tears? Therefore, forsaking 'manna,' together with melons and flesh-meats they sought leeks and onions, surely because bad minds despise the gifts of tranquillity, sweet by grace, and for the sake of carnal pleasures they covet the wearisome ways of this life, even though full of tears; they scorn to have where they may rejoice in a spiritual manner, and ardently seek where they may even groan in a carnal way. So then, let Job with a truth-telling voice rebuke the madness of these persons, for no other reason than that by a perverted judgment they set the troubled before the tranquil, the hard before the gentle, the harsh before the mild, the transitory before the eternal, the suspicious before the assured. The madness of such let Holy Church call to remembrance, when she is encompassed with cruel adversities without, which persons she held within herself as if believers, but for long endured their life opposing the faith, and let her say, *Who rejoiced in the midst of the like, and reckoned there were delights under brambles;* surely, because the evil things that they do, they learnt by the badness of the wicked going before. Whence also it is rightly subjoined;

Numb. 11, 5.

Ver. 8. *They were children of fools, yea children of base men.*

Job 30, 8. Allegg. xvi. 41. It is right for us to know that some within the pale of Holy Church are styled 'fools,' but yet 'noble,' whilst others are 'fools' and 'base.' For they are called 'fools,' but cannot be 'base,' who contemning the wisdom of the flesh, desire foolishness that shall stand them in stead, and after the newness of the interior descent are exalted by the nobility of virtue, who set at nought the foolish wisdom of the world, and covet the wise foolishness of God. Since it 1 Cor. 1, 25. is written, *Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men.* This 'foolishness' Paul charges ourselves to lay hold of, when he says, *If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.* This 'foolishness' they that perfectly followed obtained to Mat. 19, 28. hear from the voice of Wisdom, *Ye which have followed Me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* Mark how by abandoning temporal things they purchased the glory of eternal power. Accordingly what is there more foolish in this world than to abandon one's own? And what more noble in the eternal world than to come with God as judges? Verily the nobility of these judges is made mention of by Solomon bearing record, where this which I have already spoken before is Prov. 31, 23. said, *Her husband is noble in the gates, when he sitteth among the senators of the land.* For noble above measure does he regard those, whom he calls 'senators' This 'nobility' Paul had beheld in himself, when being united by Acts 17, 29. the spirit to the relationship of the Creator, he said, *Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone graven by art or man's device;* i. e. we are styled 'the offspring of God,' not as being brought forth in His Nature, but as being by His Spirit both created by His Will and made anew by His adoption. So much the more then is each one lifted up to this nobility, in proportion as he is renewed in the image he has received to the likeness of That Being in a copy.

42. But contrariwise they are 'fools and base men,' who while, in following themselves, they flee from the wisdom Above, are lulled to sleep in their ignorance as in the

vileness of an abject descent. For in proportion as they do not understand that for which they were made, in the same measure they lose the relationship of high birth vouchsafed then in the Likeness. So they are 'fools and base men,' whom the slavery of the soul withholds from the fellowship of the Eternal Inheritance. As it is written, *Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.* And it is spoken by the voice of the great preacher, *For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.* They then, who whilst they were wise in earthly things were held back from the interior nobility, were 'fools and base men' at once. Whose actions while very many imitate they are rendered 'the children of fools and base men,' and whilst they follow these in notions and practices, they are at once 'fools,' because they do not understand true wisdom, and 'base men,' because they are not renewed by any freedom of the Spirit. But these persons though they may practise the arts of the wicked, yet very often in this life occupy the places of the just, and they account themselves the children of those, whose offices from lust of honour they outwardly discharge. Which persons holy correction recals to the knowledge of themselves, i. e. that being settled in bad desires, they should mind whose children they are. For they are not the children of those whose places they occupy, but whose deeds they execute. Therefore let it be rightly said, *The children of fools and base men.* Where it is fitly subjoined;

Book XX.

John 8, 34.

1 Cor. 3, 19.

And on earth utterly not appearing.

43. For as there are very many persons upon earth, and they are hidden from the knowledge of their fellowcreatures by the lowness of their vile condition, as by a kind of overlaying of a cloak, so there are some in the Church, who whilst they submit themselves to the degradation of wicked deeds, are not known to the Divine sight. To which persons it is one day to be said, *Verily I say unto you, I know you not.* So, 'to be on earth and appear' is in a right faith through the excellency of practice to display the nobility of the soul. 'To be on earth and utterly not appear,' is to be set fast in the Church indeed by faith, but to shew forth nothing worthy of faith in practice. These then being within the pale of Holy Church, to the eyes of

xvii.

Job 30, 8. Allegation. the Divine Being both 'appear' in respect of judgment, and yet do 'not appear' in respect of the deserts of a good life, because those things, which by confessing they hold, by living they do not shew forth. Concerning whom Paul saith, *They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him.* These persons in Holy Church bear down rather than venerate the faith which they protest that they hold, whereas by her name they covet rather to secure their own profits than her's. But the Elect, whilst they take care to preserve the deservingness of faith by right deeds, are brought near to the knowledge of their Maker even amidst the throngs of lost sinners. Which is well denoted in the Gospel by the woman suffering from the bloody flux. Concerning whom the Lord says, *Who touched Me?* Peter answered reasoning, *Master, the multitude throng Thee and press Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me?* But he obtained to hear the causes in true reason, when the Lord said to him, *Somebody hath touched Me, for I likewise perceive that virtue is gone out of Me.* See how the throng 'pressed' the Lord, but she only 'touched' Him, who came to Him in humility, because surely even many lost sinners in Holy Church by learning 'press' the truth, which same they neglect to 'touch' by living well. They 'press' and are far off, because by professions they follow Divine knowledge, by habits flee it. They 'press,' I say, and are far off, because by acting they contradict that faith, which by speaking they assert. As then we are instructed by this testimony, that by touching some do not 'touch' the Lord, so some are not 'seen' by the Lord, even when they are seen; because to His secret regards, and for the punishment of condemnation, they do appear, but for the claim of Election they do not appear. Therefore let it be rightly said, *And on earth utterly not appearing;* because though the Church held them to the extent of seeming, yet those being within her the Creator did not see, in that He did not know them. Who in the season of peace for this reason maintain the faith to the extent of words, because they see that that faith flourishes generally. But when a sudden storm of adversity rises up against that Church, they are directly parted from her by a public denial; and whatever they before held as if vene-

Tit. 1, 16.

Luke 8, 45. 46.

rating her, they afterwards fight against the same as deriding her. Whence it is fitly added;

Ver. 9. *And now am I their song, yea, I am become their byword.*

44. By which same words that time of Holy Church is set forth, when she is openly derided by the lost; when the wicked gaining ground, faith shall be for a reproach, and truth shall be for a ground of accusation. For so much the more contemptible shall each individual be in proportion as he may be more righteous; and the worse object of abhorrence, the more worthy object of praise. Therefore the Holy Church of the Elect in the time of calamity 'becomes a proverb' to the wicked, because when they see the good die by torments, they take their likeness of cursing from those. For in proportion as they see a passing death, but do not see a lasting life, so much the more in scoffing do they flee present ills, in proportion as by the understanding interiorly they do not reach to lasting goods. But the particulars that are subjoined because they are not involved in obscurer sorts of sentences, we must run through in brief, that we may be able to come the sooner to those parts, wherein we have to labour. It goes on; xviii.

Ver. 10. *They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.*

45. All the wicked 'fly far' from Holy Church, not by the paces of footsteps, but by the characters of practices; they fly far not in place, but desert, whereas, pride gaining ground, they contemn her with open upbraiding. For 'to spit in his face' is not only to detract from the good in absence, but to give the lie to each one of the just even in presence. And these then whilst the wicked by openly deriding set at nought, they as it were let out in insults upon them loose words, like streams of spittle running down. But Holy Church knows how to gain ground in sufferings, and in the midst of reproaches to maintain an honourable life; she is taught neither to be cast down by adversities, nor to glory in prosperity. She is instructed, in meeting prosperity, to lay low the mind in downcasting; she is taught, in meeting adversity, to lift up the soul to the hope of the height above. She knows how to ascribe her good things to the mercifulness xix.

Job 30, 11. Allegor. of the Redeemer, she knows how to ascribe her evil things to the justice of the Judge, that both what is good she has by His bestowing, and what is bad she suffers by His permitting. And hence He immediately adds touching the Lord, saying,

Ver. 11. *Because He hath opened His quiver and afflicted me.*

xx. 46. What is denoted by 'the quiver' of God, but secret counsel? Now the Lord casts the arrow from the quiver, when from His secret counsel He sends forth an open sentence. For that any man is scourged, we know, but for what cause the scourge comes, we know not. But when after the scourge amendment of life follows, the actual power of counsel is itself disclosed as well. So the quiver shut is hidden counsel. But we are chastened by an open quiver, when by that which follows after the scourge, we see with what counsel we are stricken. When the Lord beholds sins, and yet does not move the hand to vengeance, He as it were holds the quiver shut, but by striking He shews, how greatly that displeased Him in us, which He bore long beholding it. Therefore let the Holy Church of the Elect being pressed by tribulations say, *For He hath opened His quiver, and afflicted me.* Which same on meeting with the insolent voices of her adversaries, when she sees that her preaching is not received, giving over the hardness of some, restrains the words of her preaching. For reflecting that her persecutors are rendered worse at the voice of her exhortation, she rather prefers to hold her peace. And when she sees them persons unworthy to hear, she binds up her preaching with silence drawn over. Whence he fitly adds;

And put a bridle into my mouth.

xxi. 47. They were acquainted with 'a bridle put upon themselves' before certain persons, who said, *It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you, but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.* Holy men see 'the bridle' of silence put upon themselves with the hard hearts of lost sinners, when they say by the Prophet, *How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?* Paul also charged 'a bridle to be put,' who enjoined the disciple,

Acts 13, 46.

Ps. 137, 4.

saying, *A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth condemned of himself.* For holy teachers very often by lofty ken survey the hearts of those that oppose them, and when they see those hearts forsaken by God, afflicted and groaning they hold their peace. Doth not Solomon sometimes 'put a bridle' upon the teachers, who saith, *Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee*, but if we hold our peace from rebuking for this reason, because we are afraid for the scorner's hates to rise up against us, we no longer seek God's profits, but our own. Wherein it requires to be known that sometimes when bad men are reproved they become worse. Them therefore we spare, and not ourselves, if from the love of those we cease from the rebuking of them. Whence it is needful that we sometimes endure keeping to ourselves what they are, in order that they may learn in us by good living[1] what they are not. Therefore because Holy Church, who ever gives forth her words in a spirit of charity, sometimes also withholds them on the principle of charity, let her say, *He hath put a bridle in my mouth.* As though he confessed openly, saying, 'Because in some I did not see the advancement of preaching, from those I refrained assault, that my life at all events by patience they might be taught, whereas my words they would not by the preaching proffered consent to receive.' But very often this grieves us most in tribulations, that we meet with them from those, in whom we trusted with the love of kin. And hence it is added;

Book XX. Tit. 3, 10. Prov. 9, 8. [1] al. 'by seeing.'

Ver. 12. *At the right hand of the East my calamities on the spot arose.*

48. For 'calamities' would 'rise to the left,' if at the hand of any persons set without the pale of Religion, and openly denying Christ, she met with the adverse dealings of persecution. But when she undergoes from persons seemingly believers the trial of tormentings, it is as if calamities arose to her at the right hand, because they who are enlisted under Christ's name, assail Christ's name in her. For by the very usage of speech we speak of having as 'on the right' what we account as great, and as on the left that which we look down upon, which Zechariah openly teaches, saying, *And he shewed me Jesus the high priest standing*

xxii. Zech. 3, 1. 2.

Job 30, 12. Allegg. *before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.* Who that he might the more plainly shew this that he set before, added going on; *And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Jesus was clothed with filthy garments.* 'Jesus was[1] clothed with filthy garments,' because though He was a stranger to all sin, yet He came into the likeness of the flesh of sin. And to Him on His coming Satan stood on His right hand. For the Lord appeared to hold the Jewish People as great, and the Gentiles as nought. But after that He appeared Incarnate, the Gentile world, which had been held as 'on the left' believed, whilst the Jewish People swerved aside to unbelief. Thus 'Satan stood on the right hand to Him;' because he carried off from Him that People, which had been for a long while beloved. But because that same Jewish people, being now lost, shall in the end one day believe, as the Prophet testifies, who says, *The remnant shall be saved;* the Lord removes Satan from His right hand, saying, *The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan.* And betokening the deliverance of that same people, he adds, *because He hath chosen Jerusalem.* Which same people because under the guidance of unbelief it let itself run down to the burnings of hell, but whilst it is brought back to faith, is set free from that same burning of everlasting fire, has it directly added there concerning it, *Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?*

[1] al. 'is spoken of as'

Is. 10, 21.

49. So then as there for 'the right hand' the Jewish people is denoted, so in this place by the term of 'the right hand,' the faithful people of Holy Church is denoted. And hence the Judge that is to come 'shall set the goats on His left Hand, and the sheep on His right Hand.' But when these very persons too fret Holy Church in the time of adversity, who seemed to be of the faithful, surely 'calamities arise to her on the right hand.' Now rightly is this same called 'the right hand of the East;' since it is written of the Head itself of the same, *The East is His Name.* For seeing that the light springs from the East, He is rightly called 'the East,' by the light of whose righteousness the night of our unrighteousness is enlightened. So 'calamities arise to the

Zech. 6, 12. Vul.

right hand of the East;' because these likewise leap forth to persecution, who were supposed to be Elect Members of our Redeemer. Which same calamities he rightly declares 'arise on the spot,' because whereas they who persecute were not persons without her pale, evils are brought about by them suddenly and on the spot. But if 'the right hand' is a designation of those who are truly believers, 'calamities arise to the right of the East,' because on the crisis of persecution breaking forth, the righteous undergo the cruel assaults of the wicked. It follows;

Ver. 12. *They overturned my feet, and oppressed with their footpaths as with waves.*

50. What are denoted by the Church's 'feet,' but her outermost members? which while they lend themselves to earthly deeds, are able to be the sooner deceived by adversaries in proportion as they do not understand things on high. Therefore these 'feet adversaries overturn,' that is to say, when they draw her outermost members to the error of their doctrine. The 'feet overturned' cannot keep the way, in that all the weak being either persuaded by the promises of their persecutors, or affrighted by their threats, or broken by their tortures, swerve from the right path. Now 'the paths' of adversaries are rightly likened to waves, when it is said, *and they oppressed with their footpaths as with waves;* in this way, because the life of the evil-minded, mischievous with wayward restlessness, comes down as a tempest for the overwhelming the ship of the heart, so to say. Concerning which same tempest it is said by Solomon, *As a tempest passing, the wicked shall not be.* And when the weak man sees the froward flourishing, that man the wave of wretched imitation plunges into the sea of frowardness. It follows; xxiii. Prov. 10, 25.

Ver. 13. *They did away with my paths, they plotted against me, and prevailed, and there was not any to bring help.*

51. Let blessed Job tell these things of evil spirits, i. e. of secret enemies. Let the Church Universal speak them of bad men persecuting, i. e. of open adversaries. For these 'do away with her paths,' when in the souls of certain weak ones they interrupt the ways of truth by crafty persuading. These in 'plotting prevail, when those, whom xxiv.

Job 30, 13. Allegation. they cannot openly force to evil, they turn aside by pretending what is good, but that is very wonderful, which he subjoins, *And there was not any one to bring help*, when the Psalmist exclaims touching the help of God; *A helper in seasons, in tribulation.* And, *Let them hope in Thee, who know Thy Name, for Thou, Lord, wilt not forsake those that seek Thee.* And when it is written again, *Did ever any trust in the Lord and was confounded? or did any abide in His commandments, and was forsaken? Or whom did He ever despise, that called upon Him?* On what principle, then, is it now said; *And there was not any to bring help*, excepting that those, whom Almighty God loves for all eternity, He sometimes leaves for a time? Whence it is written; *For a small moment have I forsaken thee, and with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment, and with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee.* Hence too the Psalmist besought, saying, *O forsake me not utterly.* He then knew that he might be left for a little while with advantage, who prayed that he might not be 'utterly forsaken.' For the Lord by coming helps His Saints, by 'leaving' puts them to the proof, by gifts he establishes, by tribulations he tries. Whence too it is rightly said by one of Wisdom, *For at the first she will walk with him by crooked ways, and bring fear and dread upon him, and torment him with her discipline until she try him in his thoughts.* Since the soul of the righteous grace calls, trial puts to the question. And Almighty God allows the adversaries of His Elect to grow to a height in time, that the life of the good may be purified by the pitilessness of the bad.

Ps. 9, 9. 10. Eccles. 2, 10. Is. 54, 7. 8. Ps. 119, 8. Eccles. 4, 17.

52. Since the Lord would never suffer them to be hostile to the good except he also saw what great good they did. For whilst the unrighteous deal cruelly, the righteous are purified, and the life of the wicked is enlisted to the advantage of the innocent, in that this same both by bearing down it abases, and by abasing ever fashions to better. Hence too it is rightly said by Solomon; *the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart.* And yet we often see the wise subordinate, and fools occupying the stronghold of dominion, wise men paying obedience in servitude, and fools lording it

Prov. 11, 29.

with tyrannical exultation. How then by the marking out of God's sentence is 'the fool servant to the wise,' when generally speaking he keeps him down by the right of temporal dominion? But it is to be borne in mind, that whilst against the life of the wise man the fool being uppermost enforces the terribleness of power, whilst he wearies him out with labours, rends him with insults, such a person surely by burning he purges from all the rust of bad habits. Thus the fool even in ruling is 'servant to the wise,' in that by bearing him down he advances him to a better state. In this way it is sometimes the case that over masters under age servants are set for the tutorage of discipline, they frighten, they bear hard upon them, strike them, yet do not at all cease to be servants, because they are appointed to this very end, that to their masters whilst progressing they should render service even by striking them. Therefore because the ills of the children of perdition purify whilst they torment the good, even the power of the wicked is enlisted to the welfare of the just. But very often the just when seized by tribulation account the hand of Him Who helps them slow, when the barbarity of those persecuting them wrings them somewhat too long. And the remedies of the deliverer indeed are quickened, but that which is done quickly by the deliverer, appears slow to him that is in grief. And when there is sought help to present itself to the supplicating voice, if it does not follow the voice directly, it is reckoned that it is wanting. Whence it is said now; *And there was not any one to bring help.* In which same utterance we have set forth the actual force of the suffering, because help from Above, though it is there as to the appointed providence of the protector, yet is thought to be wanting as to the quickened wishes of the sufferer. It follows;

Ver. 14. *As by a wall being broken, and a door being opened, they rushed in upon me, and were rolled down to my miseries.*

53. What is in this place designated by the title of 'a wall,' but the Redeemer of the human race, concerning whom it is said by the Prophet for the edifying of Holy Church, *There shall be set in her a wall and a bulwark?* For that same Redeemer is 'a wall' to us, Who forbids the

xxv.

Is. 26, 1.

Job 30, 15. ALLEG. rushing of evil spirits to reach to our hearts. Who also set 'a bulwark' as well to our faith, because before that He shewed Himself in flesh, He sent prophets as preachers of His mystery. Since they are rightly entitled by the name of 'a bulwark[1],' because, whereas they preached the Lord coming after, they stood as it were 'before the wall.' But it is as if 'the wall were broken,' when by the promptings of the wicked, faith, which is in our Redeemer, is done away in the hearts of some. And when power is awarded to the perverse in this life, what else but 'a door' of error is opened? And so it is as if the wall being burst asunder and the door opened the wicked rush in upon the good, when power being received temporally, the corrupt set themselves to pull down the very defences of faith too in the hearts of some. Concerning whom it is fitly said; *And were rolled down for my miseries;* that is to say, because in the first instance to their own miseries. For except that by living corruptly they fell before to their own 'miseries,' they would never afterwards persuade others also to those miseries. But after their own the children of perdition are 'rolled down to our miseries' also, when to those evil things wherein they are themselves already involved, they draw persons as well who are linked to ourselves.

[1] 'ante-murale.'

54. It is possible too that by the title of a wall may be understood the defence of discipline, as Solomon bears witness, who says, *I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding. And lo, it was all grown over with nettles, and thorns had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.* For to 'pass by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding,' is to look into the life of any careless liver, and to take a view of his deeds. Which same 'nettles or thorns fill up,' because in the hearts of the careless, itching earthly desires and the prickles of bad habits sprout forth, since it is written, *In desires is every one that is idle.* 'The stone wall was pulled down,' i. e. the discipline of the Fathers was loosened from his heart. For because 'the stone wall being pulled down' he saw that discipline was loosened, he directly added in that place going on; *Then I saw and laid it up in my heart; and by ex-*

Prov. 24, 30. 31.

Prov. 28, 19. LXX. Ben. but see Pr. 21, 25. 26.

ample I learned instruction. And therefore as it were the wall being burst the enemy enters in, when by the crafty persuading either of evil spirits, or of bad men, the defences of discipline in the heart are scattered away. But when the vigour of that same discipline is relaxed in the heart of the lost, in their eyes all the deeds of the good are had in contempt, and they account it nothing, whatever they see relating to virtues in the Elect. And hence it is added; Book XX.

Ver. 15. *I was reduced to nought.*

55. For in the reckoning of the wicked we are 'brought to nought,' when those temporal goods, which they themselves love as chief, we do not retain in our hands. Because the promises from Above being disregarded they desire the things of earth, and if ever aught rises up in the mind of those persons in the way of longing after the Eternal world, it is quickly done away by transitory gratification springing up. And hence it is directly subjoined; xxvi.

As the wind thou didst take away my desire.

Since the faithful People declares that itself suffers that, wherein those whom it loves it grieves should suffer. Thus 'the wind takes away desire,' when any transitory object does away the longing after Eternity. And hence it is yet further fitly subjoined; *And as a cloud my health hath passed away.* Since the cloud towers on high, but the breath of wind drives it into career. Thus, surely, then is it with the temporal good things of the wicked. They appear as it were by loftiness of honour to pass their time as on high, but they are daily driven on to the career of life as by a kind of blasts of their mortality. So 'health passes as a cloud,' because the glory of the wicked, in the degree that it is lofty, is not fixed. But after the desires and the courses of persons going weakly have been finished, the discourse is made to turn to the voice of the Elect, when it is forthwith introduced,

Ver. 16. *But now my soul in mine own self is withered, and the days of affliction have taken hold upon me.*

56. Since 'the soul' of the Elect 'withers now,' because it is afterwards made green in that eternal triumphing. 'Now, the days of affliction take hold upon them,' because the days of joy follow afterwards. As it is written, *To him that feareth God it shall go well at the last.* And again it is xxvii. Ecclus. 1.13.19.

Job 30, 17. delivered touching the Church, *And she shall laugh in the last day.* For now is the time of affliction to the good, that one day exulting may follow them apart from tears. Hence it is elsewhere said by those, *Thou hast humbled us in the place of affliction.* Since 'the place of affliction' is the present life, so the righteous here below, i. e. 'in the place of affliction,' are 'humbled,' because in the eternal life, i. e. in the place of delight, they are elevated. But when he said that 'the soul was withered,' he rightly put before too, *in mine own self;* because in our own selves, indeed, our soul is afflicted, but in God refreshed, and it is become far removed from the greenness of joy, in proportion as still being withheld from the light of the Creator, it draws back to itself. But then it attains to the greenness of true joy, when being lifted up by the grace of eternal contemplation it even transcends its very self. Now these particulars which we have run through by allegorical investigating, it is requisite that we hold in all points after the history as well. Which particulars however I now for this reason pass over, because I am not unaware that they are plain to those that read them. Now in the days of final persecution, because there are many that are lost and a small number that are saved, for this reason the holy man, in the time of his suffering, both utters few particulars touching the good, and a great many touching the wicked. And hence he directly turns his words to the person of those who are brought to the ground, and so conveys his own circumstances, that the things he relates may accord with those that fall. Thus it follows;

ALLEG. Prov. 31, 25. Ps. 44, 19.

Ver. 17. *In the night season my bone is pierced with pangs, and they that eat me sleep not.*

xxix. 57. If we mark the history by itself, the case appears plain, because the body of the holy man, through the hollows of ulcers, a swarming multitude of worms was wounding. But if we dive into the mystery of the allegory, what are denoted by 'the bones,' but the strong ones severally in the body of Holy Church? Who, as it were, by their solidity hold together the members, while they bear with stedfastness the practices of those going weakly. But when the heat of the last tribulation is grown to a head against her, *in the night*

season her bone is pierced with pangs; because sometimes being overcome with torments, even the very persons let themselves run off to faithlessness, who seemed to be keeping fast others to the faith. Therefore she says, *In the night season my bone is pierced with pangs.* As though she said in plain words, " Pressed with the darkness of tribulation, they are so penetrated with affliction, that even the very persons, who had within me the firmness of strength, have now, as it were, a kind of piercing of fear.' And it is well said, *And they that eat me take no sleep;* because the evil spirits, that ' eat up' all the carnal out of the Church, know not how to rest from tempting in proportion as they are not burthened with any weight of flesh. But the persecutors of Holy Church, because they are very corrupt, would that they were few in number! It goes on; Book XX.

Ver. 18. *In the multitude of them is my garment consumed, and they have bound me about as with the collar of my coat.*

58. If we give heed to the history, what else do we take ' the garment' of blessed Job for, but his body? whose ' garment indeed is consumed' when the flesh is put to torment. But according to the mystery of allegory, ' the garment' of Holy Church is the life of the faithful. For as the whole Church together is ' the garment' of Christ so the faithful severally are accounted ' garments' of that same Church. For if Holy Church were not Christ's ' garment,' Paul surely would not say, *That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle;* i. e. neither in respect of sin ' having spot,' nor in respect of a double mind ' having wrinkle,' because both by righteousness she is clean, and by a single bent stretched. She then that is washed that she should not ' have spot,' and stretched that she should not ' have wrinkle,' assuredly is a ' garment.' Therefore as the clothing of Christ is the name given to the whole Church in general, so the clothing of the Church are the souls of the several persons which being converted from error, by believing that same Church, encircle her by attaching themselves with faithfulness to her. Concerning which same the Lord saith to that Church by the Prophet, *As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely be clothed with them all,* xxix. Eph. 5, 27. Is. 49, 18.

Job 30, 19. Allec. *as with an ornament.* But when the storm of cruel persecution arises, very many of the faithful are separated from the love thereof, who seemed to have themselves attached to her heartily. So then let her say, *In the multitude of them is my garment consumed;* because whilst there are many that torment, the greatest number are brought to an end, who were attached to her by the binding tie of love.

59. Now it is well added, *And have bound me about as with the collar of my coat.* Since 'the collar of a coat' encircles the neck of the wearer, but if the neck is tied up, the use of the voice and the puff of life is done for. Holy Church, then, do the children of perdition 'tie up as with a collar of a coat,' because they endeavour by their persecutions to put out in her the life of faith, and the voice of preaching. Since this thing her persecutors are in a special manner wont to essay, that before all things they may take away from her the word of preaching. And hence these persons who withstood the first beginnings of the holy faith told the Apostles Acts 5, 28. beaten with rods, saying, *Did we not straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine.* So the body of Holy Church they had as it were girded with 'the collar of a coat,' who, the preachers being tied up, as it were pressing her neck, wished to shut up the way of the voice in her. But the several Elect are more ready to die in the time of their persecution than to hold their peace. Who whilst they are brought down in death in the body, are accounted despicable and mean by all the foolish and the carnal, because when the lost are unable to see what good things the Elect hold in the spirit, these whom they see brought to an end in the flesh, they account unhappy. And hence it is added;

Ver. 19. *I was likened to mire, and became like dust and ashes.*

xxxi. 60. Since in the judgment of lost sinners the Holy Church of the Elect is 'likened to mire,' because it is trodden under and despised in time; it is 'compared to dust and ashes,' because while they do not see her interior good things, they calculate that she has been brought to those bad things alone, which they see brought to view in her in the body. But the faithful people of the Elect, while it sees many fall from

itself, wishes, if it might obtain this, to have the times of its adversities reversed. Because the prayer of this people is delayed, its groaning is increased. Hence it is further added; Book XX.

Ver. 20. *I will cry unto Thee, but Thou wilt not hear me; I stand, and Thou regardest me not.*

61. Since Holy Church in the time of her persecution 'stands' by faith, and 'cries' by longings. But she is grieved that she is 'not regarded' as it were, when she sees her wishes under tribulations delayed. For by a high counsel, Almighty God, when His Saints are wrung tightly by the persecutions of adversaries, and when they cry with never ceasing entreaties that they may be set free, is wont to put off their voices in entreating Him, that their merits in suffering may be increased, in order that they may be the more heard in answer to merit, the more they are not heard quickly in answer to wishing. Whence it is elsewhere written, *O my God, I cry in the day time, but Thou hearest not, and in the night season.* And the very usefulness itself resulting from the delay of hearing is immediately added, when it is there brought in directly, *And not for foolishness to me.* Since for redoubling the wisdom of the Saints it is beneficial, that what is prayed for they receive slowly, that by delay desire may increase, and by desire the understanding may be augmented. But when the understanding is stretched to the full, there is opened a more ardent affection thereof towards God. And the affection is made large for obtaining the things of heaven, in proportion as it was long suffering in expecting. Yet in the midst of these things grief prompts the patience of the Saints to utterance, and whilst being delayed they gain ground, they dread lest their powers failing they should being despised be rejected. It goes on; xxxi. Ps.22,2.

Ver. 21. *Thou art changed to cruel unto me; and in the hardness of Thy hand Thou opposest Thyself against me.*

62. The old translation is widely at variance with this sense, because what is spoken in this concerning God, is related in that of adversaries and persecutors. Yet because this new translation is said to have transferred every thing from the Hebrew and Arabic more truly, we should believe whatever is delivered in it, and the right way is that into the word of it our interpretation should search with exactness. Accordingly xxxii. Lit.

Job 30, 21. Lit. he says, *Thou art changed to cruel unto me, and in the hardness of Thy hand Thou opposest Thyself to me.* In Holy Scripture when any thing is said of God unworthy, the mind of the reader is affected, as if it were ever the case that any thing that is worthy were spoken of God. Since well nigh every thing that is spoken touching God, is by this alone henceforth unworthy, that it admitted of being spoken. But for Him to Whose praise the conscious faculty, being astounded, is not equal, when may the tongue by speaking suffice? But the Holy Spirit teaching to men that understand this same truth, how unutterable are the things above and the things of God, sometimes uses even those words concerning God, which amongst men are held as a fault, that from these things which seem unworthy of men, and yet are spoken concerning God, men should be admonished to know that neither are those things even worthy of God, which whilst they are accounted worthy among men, are thought worthy of God.

Ex. 34, 14. 63. For God is called 'jealous,' as it is written, *The Lord, his Name is 'jealous.'* He is called 'wroth,' whence Ps. 86, 15. it is written, *The Lord was wroth against Israel.* The Lord Numb. 32, 13. is called 'repentant,' as where it is written, *It repenteth Me* Gen. 6, 7. *that I have made man upon the earth.* And again; *It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king over Israel.* 1 Sam. 15, 11. He is entitled compassionate, as where it is written, *Merciful and pitiful is the Lord, patient and full of compassion.* He is called 'foreknowing,' as the Apostle saith concerning Rom. 8, 29. Him, *For whom He did foreknow, He did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son.* Whereas neither 'jealousy,' nor 'wrath,' nor 'repentance,' nor strictly speaking 'compassionateness,' nor 'foreknowledge,' can be in God. For all these particulars are derived into Him from human qualities, while there is a descending to words expressive of infirmity, that as it were a kind of steps being made for us, and set beside us, by the things which we see close to us, we may one time be enabled to mount up to the high things of Him. For He is said to 'feel jealous,' who guards the chastity of his wife with torment of mind. He is said to be 'wroth,' who is inflamed with heat of spirit against evil that deserves to be punished. He is said to 'repent,' to whom

that which he has done is displeasing, and contrarily by changing does some other thing. He is called 'compassionate,' who is moved with pity towards his neighbour. Now 'misericordia' ('commiseration') is so called from 'miserum cor,' ('a miserable heart,') for this reason, because each individual sees a person wretched, and sympathizing with him, while he is affected with grief of mind, he himself makes his heart miserable, that he may free from misery the man that he is set on. He is said to 'foreknow,' who sees each particular event before it comes, and that which is future foresees before it becomes present. How then is God described as being 'jealous,' Who in watching over our chastity, is not affected by any torment of mind? How is He 'wroth,' Who in taking vengeance on our evil ways is not stirred by any agitation of mind? How is He 'repentant,' Who what He has once done is never at all sorry that He has done? How is He 'commiserating,' Who has not ever a heart of misery? How is He foreknowing, whereas nothing but what is future can be foreknown? And we know that to God there is nothing future, before the Eyes of Whom things past there are none, things present pass not by, things future come not; seeing that all that to us was and will be is in His sight at hand, and all that is present He is able to know rather than foreknow[a]. And yet He is called 'jealous,' He is called 'wroth,' He is called 'repentant,' He is called 'commiserating,' He is called 'foreknowing,' that because He watches over the chastity of each individual soul, He should after man's method be called 'jealous,' though He be not touched by torment of mind. And because He smites sins, He is said to be 'wroth,' though He be not affected by any agitation of the spirit. And because Himself unchangeable He changes that that He is minded, He is said to 'repent,' though it is the thing He changes, not His counsel. And when He succours our misery, He is called 'commiserating,' though He succours the miserable, and has not ever a heart of misery. And because the things which to us are future He sees, which same however to the Same Being are always at hand, He is styled 'foreknowing,' though He does not in any way foresee the future, which He sees as present. For

[a] al. 'can rather be known than foreknown.'

Job 30, 22. Hist. even whatsoever things are, in His Eternity are not therefore seen because they are, but therefore they are because they are seen. Whilst therefore there is a coming down to the words of our changeableness, by those, as being made a kind of steps, let him, who is able, mount up to the unchangeableness of God, that he may see One shewing jealousy, without jealousy, One wroth without wrath, One repentant without sorrow or repentance, full of commiseration without a miserable heart, foreknowing without foresight. For in Him can neither the past nor the future be found, but all things changeable last unchangeably, and things, which in themselves cannot exist together, are all of them at once and together present to Him, and nothing that goes by passes away in Him, because in His Eternal Being, in an incomprehensible manner, all the rolls of ages whilst passing remain, whilst running a race stand still.

64. As then we understand Him 'jealous' without jealousy, 'wroth' without wrath, so He might by the holy man be also called 'cruel' without cruelty. Since he is called 'cruel,' who while smiting with severity spares not; that is to say that in this passage 'cruel' should be taken for one striking with severity, and not sparing the avenging of sin. Hence also Isaiah, when he saw the day of final Judgment was destined to come not henceforth with pardon but with rigour,

Is. 13, 9. says, *Behold the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath, and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it.* Therefore the holy man, that he might declare that this same cruelty is more suited to himself than to God, says, *Thou art changed to cruel unto me.* As though he said in plain terms, 'Thou, Who hast in Thine own Self nought of cruelty, to me, whom Thou sufferest not to draw breath from persecution, Thou seemest cruel.' For so God is not capable of being cruel, just as He is not in the least degree capable of being changed. But because in God there comes not either cruelty or changeableness at any time, whilst He says 'unto me,' he shews that he is sensible that God is in Himself neither 'cruel' nor 'changeable.' But because as concerns ourselves things prosperous and things adverse shift to and fro, in this that we ourselves are changed, we as it were imagine

as concerns ourselves His mind changed. But He the same Being remaining unchangeable in Himself, in the thought of men's hearts comes to be felt now one way and now another, according to the character of their minds. For the light of the sun too, whereas it is not at all unlike to itself, seems to weak eyes harsh, but to sound eyes gentle; that is to say, by their changing, not by its own. Therefore as we before said, in saying, *Thou art changed*, he added *unto me*, that this very 'cruelty' and 'changing' might be not in the attributes of the Judge, but in the mind of the sufferer. Which he laid open by other words also, saying, *And in the hardness of Thine hand Thou opposest Thyself to me.* For 'the Hand' of the Lord is thought 'hard,' when being opposed to our will, that thing which displeases Him in us, it follows hard upon by striking; and He redoubles the strokes, when the soul of the sorrower looks for clemency. Which words, however, according to the mystery of the allegory, suit well the words of Holy Church speaking in the accents of the weak, who very often reckon themselves to be smitten more than they fancy they deserve, and esteem as cruelty of the Judge the severity of the lancing howsoever most just, seeing too that when the wound of the sick man is cut away by the chirurgeon's steel, the operator is called cruel, who however by the hardness of the hand that cuts is opposed to the wound, but in concert with the health. It proceeds; BOOK XX. ALLEG.

Ver. 22. *Thou liftedst me up, and as it were setting me upon the wind, thou dashedst me down strongly.*

65. Because the glory of the present life is seen as on high, but is not set firm by any stedfastness, one is as if he were 'lifted up and set upon the wind,' who rejoices in earthly prosperity, because the breath of fleeting happiness lifts him up only for this end, that it may in a moment prostrate him the worse below. For whereas Holy Church is high in honour with all persons, the weak ones in her, who rejoice in transitory successes[h], whereunto do they seem lifted up but as set upon the wind? Because in the succeeding season of persecution, when the breath of prosperity is gone by, their 'lifting up' is brought to the earth in a moment, if XXXIII.

[h] Some read 'successibus,' others 'successionibus,' which last may mean 'advancements occurring in the change of things.'

Job 30, 25. Allegor. He wounds as to the health of the body; that being brought low outwardly they should arise inwardly, in order that lying prostrate in the body those should be brought back to the standing of the interior, who whilst standing outwardly lay low to the standing of the soul. It goes on;

Ver. 25. *I wept of old over him that was in trouble; my soul suffered with the poor.*

xxxvi. Hist. 68. Though it is true compassion to concur with the suffering of a fellow creature by bountifulness, yet sometimes when the several outward things are abundantly provided for us to bestow, the hand of him that gives finds the act of giving more quickly than the feeling does sorrow. Hence it is necessary for us to know that he gives in a perfect way, who together with that, which he reaches forth to the afflicted, takes in himself the feeling of the afflicted as well; that he should first transfer the suffering of the person sorrowing into himself, and then, to meet the sorrow of that person by the act of service render concurrence. For often, as we said before, the abundance of good things creates the bestower of a benefit, and not the excellence of compassion. For he, who perfectly compassionates the afflicted, generally even gives that to the persons in want, wherein he himself, if he gives it, is brought to shifts. And then the compassion of our heart is to the full, when we are not afraid to take upon ourselves the evil of want in behalf of a fellow creature, in order that we may set him free from suffering.

69. Which model of pitifulness in very deed the Mediator between God and Man gave to us. Who when He could have succoured us even without dying, yet was minded to come to the aid of mankind by dying, because plainly He would have loved us too little, except He took upon Him our wounds as well; nor would He exhibit the face of His love to us, unless the thing that He was to take away from us, He did Himself undergo for a time. For He found us subject to suffering, and mortal beings, and He, Who caused us to exist out of nothing, doubtless had the power to restore us from suffering even without death. But that He might shew how great the virtue of Compassion is, He deigned to become in our behalf what He would not have us to be, that He should take upon Him death temporally in His own

Person, which death He should banish for evermore from ourselves. Could not He, while continuing invisible to us in the riches of His own Godhead, have been able to enrich us with wonderful powers? But that man might be brought back to the interior riches, God deigned to appear poor without. Hence also the great Preacher, that he might kindle to the kindness of bounty the bowels of our compassion, said, *For our sakes He became poor, when He was rich.* Who speaks in this way also; *Not that to others there should be a releasing, but to you tribulation.* These things doubtless he brought in condescending to the weak, because some not having the strength to bear want, it is better borne to give less, than after one's bounty to murmur on account of straitness of poverty. For that he might kindle the minds of those that heard him to great affections for giving, a little while after he introduced the words, saying, *But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly.* But we sometimes say that it is more to sympathize in heart than it is to give; because every one who perfectly sympathizes with one in want, reckons as less all that he gives. For except that good will surpassed the hand of a person in giving, that same great Preacher would not have said to the disciple, *Who have begun before not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.* Since it is easy in good deeds to obey even against one's will. But this great excellence had appeared in the disciples, that the good that was enjoined them, they had been forward to even before.

Book XX.

2 Cor. 8, 9.

ib. v. 13.

2 Cor. 9, 6.

2 Cor. 8, 10.

70. Thus because the holy man knew that with Almighty God greater sometimes is the gift of the mind than of the benefit, let him say, *I wept of old over him that was in trouble, and my soul compassionated the poor man.* For in bestowing outward things, he rendered an object without himself. But he who bestowed upon his neighbour weeping and compassion, gave him something even from his very self. But on this account we say that compassion is more than the gift, because for the most part some sort of thing even he gives who does not entertain compassion, but never does he, who feels true compassion, withhold that which he sees to be necessary for his neighbour.

71. Which sentence surely is well suited to the accents

Job 30, 26. 27. Allegor. of Holy Church, who while she sees persons afflicted in the tears of penitence, joins her own tears thereto by continual prayer, and sympathizes with the needy person as often as by the entreaties of her intercession she helps the mind bared of virtues. Since we lament over the afflicted sympathizing with him, when we reckon the hurts of others as our own, and by our tears strive to cleanse away the sins of those guilty of transgression. In the doing which, indeed, we very often help ourselves more than we do those in whose behalf it is done, because before the Inmost Umpire, Who also breathes into us the grace of charity, he perfectly washes out his own several acts, who disinterestedly bewails those of others. Therefore let Holy Church, being seized in the time of the last persecution, recall to remembrance the good things which she has done in the time of peace, saying, *I wept of old over him that was afflicted, and my soul compassionated the poor man.* Who longing for the eternal delights of the interior light, yet still delayed, because she is beset with outward ills, may subjoin in the accents of the holy man;

Ver. 26. *When I looked for good, then evil came unto me; and when I waited for light, there broke forth darkness.*

xxxvii. 72. For the faithful people 'looks for good,' but receives evil, and it 'waits for light,' and meets with 'darkness,' because by the grace of the recompensing it hopes to be now already admitted to the joys of the Angels, and yet being delayed for a longer time here below, it is exposed to the hands of those that persecute it; and he who calculates to enjoy as quickly as possible the recompensing of the Light Eternal, is still forced to suffer here the darkness of his persecutors. Which same ills of those persecuting them would grieve them the less, if they arose from unbelievers and adversaries. But they torture the mind of the Elect the worse in proportion as they proceed from those, upon whom they were foreassuring good. Whence it is yet further added;

Ver. 27. *My bowels boiled, and rested not.*

Since for 'the bowels' of Holy Church 'to boil' is for her to endure in the fierceness of persecution, these very persons too, whom she had before in the love of the faith carried as

'bowels.' Which same first acquainting themselves with her secrets, in the same proportion as they know where she suffers the greatest pain, to so much the worse degree never rest from the afflicting of her; which persons however even in the time of her peace she bears heavily with, because she takes thought of their ways as opposite to her own preachings. For she groans when she espies the life of those as unlike to herself. Concerning whom also it is fitly subjoined; Book XX.

The days of affliction prevented me.

For the Holy Church of Elect persons knows that in the last persecution she shall suffer many ills, but 'the days of her affliction prevent her;' because even in the time of peace she bears within herself the life of the wicked with a heavy spirit. For though in the last days there follow the open persecution of the unbelievers, yet this same even before it comes to light, those in her who are believers to the extent of the word only by bad practices forerun. It goes on;

Ver. 28. *I went mourning: without rage rising up, I cried out in the crowd.*

73. I see that it is a thing to be carefully noted historically considered, that the holy man who a little before said, *Thou hast lifted me up*, added below, *I went mourning*. For by a wonderful arrangement at one and the same time there is wont to meet together in the courses of good men, at once without, the honour of the highest pitch, and within, the mourning of afflicted abasement. Hence the holy man likewise, whilst lifted to a height by substance and by honours, 'went mourning;' for though this man the high credit of power displayed advanced above his fellow-creatures, yet inwardly he offered to the Lord by his mourning the secret sacrifice of a contrite heart. Since *the sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit.* Now all the Elect are taught by inward reflecting to fight against the temptations of outward superiority. Which persons, if they set their heart to their outward good fortune, assuredly would cease to be righteous. But because it cannot be that upon the mere grounds of the successes of fortune alone the heart of man should never be at all tempted with however slight a degree of pride, holy men strive hard within against their very good fortune itself; I do not say, lest in self-exaltation, but lest in the love of that prosperity at all events xxxviii. Hist. Ps. 51, 17.

Job 30, 28. Hist. they should be brought to the ground. And it is most effectually to have been brought under this, to have surrendered the mind in a state of captivity to the desires thereof. But who that has a taste for earthly things, who that embraces temporal objects, would not look upon blessed Job as happy amidst so many circumstances of prosperity, when the health of the body, the life of his children, the preservation of his household, the completeness of his flocks, were all vouchsafed to him? But that in all these circumstances he did not take delight, he is his own witness, in that he says, *I went mourning.* For to the holy man still placed in this state of pilgrimage, all that is full of abundance, without the Vision of God, is destitution; because when the Elect see that all things are theirs, they lament that they do not see the Author of all things, and to them all this is too little, because there is still wanting the appearance of One. And in such sort does the grace of Heavenly Appointment exalt them without, that nevertheless, within, the sorrow of the instructress charity holds them under discipline. By which same they learn, that for the things which they receive outwardly, they should ever be the more humbled to themselves, should keep the mind under the yoke of discipline, should never by the liberty of power be made to break out into impatience. Whence also it is fitly subjoined, *Without rage rising in the crowd, I cried out.* For it often happens that the tumults of seditious men provoke the spirit of their rulers, and by disorderly emotions they transgress the limit of their orderliness.

74. And very often they who are set at the head, except in the mouth of the heart they be held in with the bridle of the Holy Spirit, leap forth into the fierceness of enraged retribution, and as much as they are able to do, reckon themselves to be at liberty to do with those under them. For impatience is almost always the friend of power, and that power when evil it even rules over as subject to it. For what that same feels, power executes. But holy men bow down themselves much more to the yoke of patience inwardly, than they are above others outwardly, and they exhibit without the truer governance, in proportion as they maintain within more lowly servitude to God: and they for this reason often

endure persons the more fully, the more they have it in their power to revenge themselves upon them, and lest they should ever pass over into things unlawful, they very often will not put in execution in their own behalf even what is lawful; they are subject to the clamours of those under their charge, they rebuke in love those, whom they bear in mildness. Whence it is rightly said now, *Without rage rising up in the crowd, I cried out;* in this way, because against the clamours of the unruly the good have 'crying out,' but they have not 'rage,' because those whom they bear with gently they do not cease to teach. But these particulars which after the historical view we have delivered concerning one individual, it remains that we understand after the allegorical view concerning diverse Elect ones of Holy Church. For she too in her Elect 'goes mourning,' even in prosperous circumstances. For she accounts nothing truly prosperous to her, until the good, which she is preeminently seeking after, she may lay hold of. Since her faithful ones enjoy temporal peace indeed, but sigh evermore; they are honoured, and afflicted; because very often they are seen at the highest pitch there, where they are not citizens. She too 'rises in the crowd without rage, and cries out,' because she presses upon the life of the evil doers with the eagerness of right jealousy, not with the frenzy of rage. She is angry and loving, she deals wrathfully and is tranquil, that so her weak members she may reform by zealousness, and cherish in pitifulness. It goes on;

Book XX.

Allegorically.

Ver. 29. *I was a brother to dragons, and a companion to ostriches.*

75. What is there denoted by the title of 'dragons,' but the life of evil minded men? Of whom also it is said by the prophet, *They drew up the wind like dragons.* For all wicked men 'draw in wind like dragons,' when they are swoln with evil minded pride. But who are used to be understood by the designation of 'ostriches,' saving pretenders? For the ostrich has wings, but has not flight; because all pretenders have an appearance of sanctity, but the goodness of sanctity they have not. For those persons the appearance of good conduct adorns, but the wing of virtue never lifts them from the earth. So let the Elect people of

xxxix.

Jer. 14, 6.

Job 30, 29. Allegor. Holy Church, because in the time of its peace it suffers within itself persons that are evil minded and pretenders, say the words, *I was a brother to dragons, and a companion to ostriches.* Which too in a special manner accords with the words of blessed Job, who to the highest pitch of great fortitude was a good man amongst bad. For no one is perfect who amidst his neighbours' evil things is not patient. For he who does not bear others' evil with composure, is by his impatience witness to himself that he is very far removed from the plenitude of goodness. For he refuses to be Abel, whom the malice of Cain does not exercise.

76. Thus in the threshing of the floor the grains are squeezed under the chaff, thus the flowers come forth between thorns, and the rose that smells grows along with the thorn that pricks. Thus the first man had two sons, but one was elect, the other refuse. The three sons of Noah too did the ark contain, but while two continued in humility, one went headlong into the mocking of his father. Two sons Abraham had, but one was innocent, the other the persecutor of his brother. Two sons also Isaac had, one saved in humility, while the other even before that he was born was cast away. Twelve sons Jacob begat, but of these one was sold in innocency, while the rest were through wickedness the sellers of their brother. Twelve Apostles too were chosen in Holy Church; but that they might not remain untried, one is mixed with them, who by persecuting should try them. For to a just man there is joined a sinner together with wickedness, just as in the furnace to the gold there is added chaff along with fire, that in proportion as the chaff burns the gold may be purified. So then those are truly good men, who are enabled to hold on in goodness even in the midst of bad men; herein too it is said to Holy Church by the voice of the Spouse; *As a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.* Hence the Lord saith to Ezekiel; *And thou, son of man, unbelievers and overturners are with thee, and thou dwellest among scorpions.* Hence Peter magnifies the life of blessed Lot, saying, *And delivered righteous Lot, when oppressed, from the wrongful conversation of the wicked. For to be seen and to be heard he was righteous, living among those, who from day to day vexed the soul of the righteous man*

Cant. 2, 2. Ez. 2, 6. 2 Pet. 2, 7. &c.

by wicked works. Hence Paul magnifies the life of his disciples, and in magnifying strengthens it, saying, *In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding the word of life.* Hence by John, the Angel of the Church of Pergamus is borne witness to in the words, *I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith.* So then let blessed Job, that he may evince what firmness he is of, tell with whom he lived, saying, *I was a brother to dragons, and a companion to ostriches.* Because it would have been but little that he himself did good things, except that for the heightening of his goodness he likewise sustained what was evil at the hands of others. It goes on;

Book XX. Phil. 2, 15. 16. Rev. 2, 13.

Ver. 30. *My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat.*

77. This we forbear to take account of after the history, for this reason, that the force of the speech appears from the pain of the suffering. But because, as we have already often said, blessed Job very frequently so relates things done, as to foretell things to be done, this excellently agrees with the accents of Holy Church, who in her weak members grievously feels the pain of the last persecution. And when others die off from her, all the stronger ones are wrung with sorrow. For her outward concern is earthly dispensing, but the interior is a heavenly charge. And so by the name of the 'skin' the weak are denoted, who now do service in her to exterior usefulness. While by the bones the strong are represented, in that in them the whole jointing of her body is cemented. And therefore because either being invited by bribes, or distressed by persecutions, many weak persons in her fall from the standing of faith, and themselves after they have fallen persecute her, what is it but that she suffers a 'blackness of her skin,' that in those very ones she should afterwards appear foul, in whom she before shewed fair. For whilst they who had been before accustomed to manage outward things aright, afterwards rage against the Elect of God, as it were 'the skin' of the Church has lost the hue of foregoing righteousness, in that it has come to the blackness of iniquity. Which Jeremiah also bewails under the likeness of the pri-

xl.

Job 30, 31. cipal metal, saying, *How is the gold become dim: how is the fine colour changed?* The froward, therefore, when they

Allegor. Lam. 4, 1. go forth from her sacraments, very often take a place of honour amongst the children of perdition, so that the very persons should rage against Holy Church with authority, who as it were in knowing despise this Church more cruelly. And hence when he said, *My skin is black*, he added, *upon me;* because those whom she before had as it were white as to the beautifulness of righteousness, she afterwards carries 'black' the worse. But when 'the skin' is turned to 'blackness,' the strong that are in her are consumed with jealousy of the faith. And hence he fitly subjoins; *And my bones are dried up with heat.* For in this way in the time before too that strongest bone of Holy Church, Paul, burned with a certain dryness of weariness, when he said to some persons on their

2 Cor. 11, 29. falling; *Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?* And so 'the skin is made black, and the bones are dried up with heat;' because while the weak leap forth to iniquity, all the strong are tortured with the fire of their zeal. It goes on;

Ver. 31. *My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep.*

xli. 78. Whereas the organ gives its sounds by means of pipes, and the harp by chords; it may be that by the 'harp' right practising is denoted, and by the 'organ' holy preaching. For by the pipes of an organ we not unsuitably understand the mouths of persons preaching, and by the chords of the harps the bent of those living aright. Which whilst it is stretched to another life by the afflicting of the flesh, it is as

[1] 'extenuata,' al. 'extenta.' if the thin drawn[1] chord in the harp sounded in the admiration of those beholding. For the chord is dried that it may give a suitable note on the harp; because holy men also chasten their body, and subject it to service, and are stretched from things below to those above. Moreover it is to be considered that the chord in the harp, if it be strung too little, does not sound, if too much, it sounds harsh; because doubtless the virtue of abstinence is altogether nothing if a man does not tame his body as much as he is able; or it is very ill ordered if he wears it down more than he is able. For by abstinence the imperfections of the flesh are to be

done away, and not the flesh; and every one ought to rule himself with such great control, that both the flesh may not carry itself high for sin, and yet that it may be upheld in practice for the carrying out of righteousness. It is a satisfaction herein to look at the great preacher, with what great skill of preceptorship the souls of believers like chords strung on the harp, one set by stretching the more, he draws fine, another by loosening from their stretch he preserves. For to some he says; *Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness.* And again he says; *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth.* And yet to the most beloved preacher he writes, saying, *Drink no longer water, but use a little wine, for thy stomach's sake, and for thine often infirmities.* Thus those chords by drawing thin he stretches, lest by not being stretched they altogether give no sound. But this chord he abates of its stretching, lest whilst it is stretched more, the less it should sound.

Book XX.

Rom. 13, 13. Col. 3, 5. 1 Tim. 5, 23.

79. But whether it be the holy preachers in the Church, or the simpleminded and temperate generally, as far as they are vouchsafed powers, they render to their neighbours in her the song of goodly exhortation. For both the wise sort severally keep discreetly on the watch to the fruit of preaching, and that they may draw others to life they ply themselves with a sound of mighty persuading; and they that appear to be of slower wit within her, by the mere merit of their lives, to the extent that they see that they are able, take upon them authority of exhortation towards others, and cease not to draw to the heavenly Country those whom they are able. But Holy Church being borne down by the last persecutions, when she sees her words to be set at nought by the children of perdition, shapes the goodness of her love to lamentations alone, because surely she bewails those whom she is not able by exhorting to draw. Let her say then, *My harp also is turned to mourning, and mine organ into the voice of them that weep.* As though she avowed in plain words, saying, 'In the season of my peace, indeed, by some I preached little things after the manner of a harp, whilst by others things great and sounding after the manner of an organ; but now 'my harp is turned into mourning and mine organ into the voice of them that weep,' because whilst I see

Job 30, 31. Allegor. myself to be despised I mourn over those who hear not the song of preaching.' Such things is Holy Church to do by certain persons in the end, these things has she already done by certain in her beginnings. For the first martyr Stephen endeavoured by preaching to benefit the Jews that persecuted him, which persons when he saw, notwithstanding, after the words of preaching to have flocked together to throwing stones, he prayed with his knees set fast, saying, *Lord Jesus, lay not this sin to their charge.* How then was it to him who for long had told things both small and great, but that the melody of his 'harp and of his organ' was already mute, and they were 'turned into mourning,' because those whom he had not drawn in preaching, he wept for in loving? Which same Holy Church ceases not daily to do, because she already sees that the word of preaching is almost every where become mute. For some close their mouths from speaking, others scorn to hear right things. But the mind of the Elect whilst it sees the song of preaching to be stilled, returns groaning and in silence to lamentations. Therefore let her say, *My harp is turned into mourning, and mine organ into the voice of them that weep*, because every elect person in proportion as the voice of holy preaching has been stilled, so much the more sorely does he bewail the woes of the Church.

Acts 7, 60.

Thus far blessed Job has described the evils that he underwent; but from this place he begins to relate with more particularity the good things that he did. Now the words of grief we have run through by an historical and allegorical explanation: but the deeds of virtuous qualities we in great measure hold according to the text of the history alone, lest if we draw these to the exploring of mysteries, we should perchance appear to be making void the verity of the deed.

BOOK XXI.

The thirty-first chapter of the Book of Job is explained to verse twenty-four, exclusive, and chastity, humility, and mercifulness being first commended, many particulars are especially taught relative to the avoiding of the occasion of sin.

1. THE sense of Sacred Revelation requires to be weighed with so exact a balancing between the text and the mystery, that the scale of either side being adjusted, this latter[a] neither the weight of over-curious scrutinizing should sink down, nor again the deadness of unconcern leave void. For many sentences thereof are pregnant with such a conception of allegories, that any one who strives to hold them after the history alone, is deprived of the knowledge of them by his indifference. But there are some that are so made subordinate to external precepts, that if a man desires to penetrate them with greater particularity, within indeed he finds nothing, whilst even that too which they tell of without, he hides from himself. i.

2. Whence it is well said also in historical relation by a method of representing; *And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the almond and plane-trees, and pilled them in strakes, and when the bark was off, where they were stripped, the white appeared, and the parts that were whole remained green; and after this manner the colour was made variegated.* When it is further added, *And he set them in the gutters in the watering-troughs, that when the flocks came to drink they should have the rods before their eyes, and should conceive in looking on them. And the flocks, when they conceived, looked on the rods, and brought forth cattle ringstraked, spotted, and speckled.* For what is it Gen. 30, 37–39.

[a] 'hunc,' which seems to agree with 'intellectus' referred to 'mysterium.'

Jon 31, 1. to set before the eyes of the cattle 'rods of green poplar, and of the almond and plane-trees,' but through the course of Holy Scripture to furnish for an example to the people the lives and sentences of the Ancient Fathers, which same because by the testing of reason they are in a right line, are styled 'rods.' From which he 'peels the bark' in part, that in those which are stripped the inward whiteness may appear, and in part he keeps the bark, that just as they were outwardly, they should remain in greenness. And the colour of the rods is made pied, whereas the bark is in part stripped off, in part retained. Since before the eyes of our reflection the sentences of the foregoing Fathers are placed like pied rods, in which whereas we very often avoid the sense of the letter, we are as it were withdrawing the bark, and whereas we very often follow the meaning of the letter, we as it were preserve the bark. And when from those same the bark of the letter is removed, the interior whiteness of the allegory is brought to view, and when the bark is left, the green grown examples of the outward meaning are shewn. Which Jacob did well to 'set in the watering-troughs,' because our Redeemer set them in the books of the Sacred Lore by which we are inwardly watered. 'The rams mix with the sheep looking at these,' because our reasoning spirits when they are fixed in the earnest minding of those mingle themselves with the several particular actings, that they should beget such a progeny of works as they see examples of precepts going before in words, and the progeny of good practice may have a different colour, because both sometimes, the bark of the letter being removed, it sees what is within with acuteness, and sometimes, the covering of the history being preserved, it moulds itself well in the outward.

3. For because the Divine sentences require sometimes to be explored internally, and sometimes to be viewed externally, it is said by Solomon also, *He that strongly presseth the udder for the drawing forth milk squeezeth out butter, and he that wringeth*[1] *violently draweth out blood.* For we 'press the udder strongly,' when we weigh with minute understanding the word of Sacred Revelation, by which way of 'pressing' whilst we seek 'milk,' we find

Prov. 30, 33.

[1] 'emungit,' al. 'emulget.'

'butter,' because whilst we seek to be fed with but a little insight, we are anointed with the abundance of interior richness. Which, nevertheless, we ought neither to do too much nor at all times, lest while milk is sought for from the udder there should follow blood. For very often persons whilst they sift the words of Sacred Revelation more than they ought, fall into a carnal apprehension. For 'he draws forth blood, who wringeth violently.' Since that is rendered carnal which is perceived by an over-great sifting of the spirit. Whence it is requisite that the deeds of blessed Job, which he for this reason relates amidst the words of upbraiding friends, that his afflicted soul might not fall away in despair, we should examine into according to the weight of the history, lest if the mind explain these in a spiritual sense above what is necessary, from the udder of his words there be blood answering us instead of milk. But if he does sometimes relate some things mystical in the relation of his works, it is necessary that the mind with quickened speed return to these considerations, whereunto as is given to be understood the very order of the person speaking itself bids that mind. For the holy man, after he had told the things that had been inflicted on him by the scourge of God, now by enumerating in order his own virtues makes it known what sort of person he was before the scourge, so constructing the history of his life, as to insert therein a something very rare which might be understood in an allegorical way, that both in a large proportion they should be historical facts that he records, and yet occasionally, by means of these same, he should rise up to a spiritual meaning. Thus with what strength he had bound up his exterior conduct from all falling by the training of inward safe-keeping, he tells, saying,

Ver. 1. *I made a covenant with mine eyes that I should not even think upon a maid.*

ii. Hist.

4. Whereas the soul is invisible, it is in no degree affected by the delightfulness of things corporeal, except that, being closely attached to the body, it has the senses of that body as a kind of opening for going forth. For seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching, are a kind of ways of the mind, by which it should come forth without, and go a lust-

Job 31, 2. Hist. ing after the things that are without the limits of its substance. For by these senses of the body as by a kind of windows the soul takes a view of the several exterior objects, and on viewing longs after them. For hence Jeremiah saith; *For death is come up through our windows, and is entered into our palaces;* for 'death comes up by the windows and enters into the palace,' when concupiscence coming through the senses of the body enters the dwelling-place of the mind. Contrary whereunto that which we have often already said touching the righteous is spoken by Isaiah; *Who are they that fly as clouds, and as the doves at their windows?* For the righteous are said to fly as clouds, because they are lifted up from the defilements of earth, and they are 'as doves at their windows,' because through the senses of the body they do not regard the several objects without with the bent of rapacity, and carnal concupiscence does not carry those persons off without. But he who through these windows of the body heedlessly looks without, very often falls even against his will into the delightfulness of sin, and being fast bound by desires, he begins to will what he willed not. For the precipitate soul, whilst it does not forecast beforehand, that it should not incautiously see what it might lust after, begins afterwards with blinded eyes to desire the thing that it saw. And hence the mind of the Prophet, which being uplifted was often admitted to interior mysteries, because he beheld the wife of another without heed, being darkened afterwards joined her to him without right. But the holy man, who as a kind of judge of greatest equity is set over the senses granted him in the body, as over subject officers, sees offences before they come, and closes the windows of the body as against a plotting enemy, saying, *I made a covenant with mine eyes that I should not even think upon a maid.* For that he might preserve the thoughts of the heart with chastity, he 'made a covenant with his eyes,' lest he should first see without caution what he might afterwards love against his will. For it is very greatly that the flesh drags downwards, and the image of a shape once bound on the heart by means of the eye is with difficulty unloosed by the hand of great struggling. So then that we may not deal with things lascivious in thought we have need to take precaution;

Jer. 9, 21.

Is. 60, 8.

because it is not befitting to look at what is not lawful to be lusted after. For that the mind may be preserved pure in thought, the eyes must be forced away from the wantonness of their pleasure, like a kind of ravishing unto sin. For neither would Eve have touched the forbidden tree, except she had looked on it first without taking heed; since it is written, *And the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree delightful to look upon, and she took of the fruit thereof and did eat.* Gen. 3, 6. Hence, therefore, it is to be estimated with what great control we who are living a mortal life ought to restrain our sight towards forbidden objects; if the very mother of the living came to death through means of the eyes. Hence too under the voice of Judæa, who, whereas by seeing she coveted external things, parted with interior blessings, the Prophet says; *Mine eye hath robbed mine heart.* Lam. 3, 51. For by lusting after things visible, she lost the invisible virtues. She, then, who lost the interior fruits by the exterior sight, did by the eye of the body endure the 'robbing of the heart.' Hence by ourselves, for safely keeping purity of heart, there ought also to be preserved the disciplining of the exterior senses. For with whatever degree of excellency the mind may be enriched, with whatever amount of gravity it may be invigorated, yet the carnal senses ring outwardly with a something childish, and except they were restrained by the weight of interior gravity, and as it were by a sort of manly energy, they drag the soul unstrung to things loose and light.

5. Let us then see in what manner blessed Job kept in by a manly[1] vigour of wisdom all that the flesh might breathe of in him of loose and childish. For he says, *I made a covenant with mine eyes*, and because he quenched not only the doing but also the thinking of lust in himself, going on he added; *that I should not even think on a maid.* For he knew that lust has need to be checked in the heart, he knew by the gift of the Holy Spirit that our Redeemer on His coming would go beyond the precepts of the Law, and put away from His Elect not only lustful indulgence of the flesh, but also of the heart, saying, *It hath been written, Thou shalt not commit adultery? But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a* Matt. 5, 27. 28.

[1] 'juvenili.'

Job 31, 2. Hist. *woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart.* For by Moses lust perpetrated, but by the Author of purity lust imagined, is condemned. For hence it is that the first Pastor of the Church says to the
1 Pet. 1, 13. disciples; *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope perfectly in the grace that is offered to you.* For to 'gird up the loins' of the flesh is to withhold lust from accomplishment, but 'to gird up the loins of the mind,' is to restrain it from the imagining thereof as well. Hence it is that the Angel who addresses John is described as being
Rev. 1, 13. 'girt above the paps with a golden girdle.' For because the purity of the New Testament puts restraint upon lust of the heart likewise, the Angel who appeared therein, came 'girt' in the breast. Whom a golden girdle rightly binds, because whoever is a citizen of the country Above does not now forsake impurity from dread of punishment, but from the love of charity. Now the wickedness of lust is committed either in thought or deed. For our crafty enemy when he is driven away from the carrying out of the deed, makes it his business to defile by secret thought. Hence too it is said to
Gen. 3, 14. the serpent by the Lord, *Thou shalt creep on the breast and belly.* That is, 'the serpent creeps with his belly,' when the gliding enemy by the human members subject to him calls lust into exercise even to the fulfilling of the deed; but 'the serpent creeps with the breast,' when those whom he cannot pollute in the deed of lust, he does pollute in the thought. Thus one man now perpetrates lust in act of doing, to this man the serpent creeps by the belly. But another man entertains it in the mind as to be committed, and to him the serpent 'creeps by the breast.' But because through the thought we are brought to the fulfilling deeds, the serpent is rightly described first as 'creeping upon the breast,' and afterwards 'upon the belly.' Hence blessed Job because he maintained discipline even in the thought, by a single guarding mastered both 'the breast and belly of the serpent,' saying, *I made a covenant with mine eyes, that I should not even think on a maid.* Which same purity of heart whoever does not aim at acquiring, what else does he but drive away from himself the Author of that purity? whence blessed Job too directly adds;

Ver. 2. *For what portion would God have in me from above, and what inheritance would the Almighty have from on high?*

iii. 6. As though he said in plain words; 'If I defile my mind in thought, I can never be the 'inheritance' of Him, Who is the Author of purity.' For the rest are no good things at all, if to the eyes of the secret Judge they be not approved by the testimony of chastity. For all the virtues lift themselves up in the sight of the Creator by reciprocal aid, that because one virtue without another is either none at all or the very least one, they should be mutually supported by their alliance together. For if either humility forsake chastity, or chastity abandon humility, before the Author of humility and chastity, what does either a proud chastity, or a polluted humility avail to benefit us? And so that the holy man might obtain to be owned by his Maker in the remaining particulars of good, keeping purity of the heart, let him say, *I made a covenant with mine eyes, that I should not even think on a maid. For what portion would God have in me from above, and what inheritance would the Almighty have from on high?* As though he made the confession in plain words, saying, The Creator of the things on high refuses to own me for his possession, if in His sight my mind rots in the lowest desires.

7. But herein it should be known that that is one thing which the mind meets with from the tempting of the flesh, and another thing, when by consent it is tied and bound with gratifications. For very often it is struck by wrong thinking and resists, but very often when it conceives any thing wrong, it revolves this within itself even in the way of desire. And certainly impure thought never in the least defiles the mind when it strikes it, but when it subdues the same to itself by the taking delight. Thus it is hence the great Preacher says, *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.* For that is 'temptation common to man,' by which we are very often reached in the thought of the heart even against our will, because this, viz. that even things forbidden sometimes occur to the mind, this assuredly we have in our own selves derived from the burthen of human nature as subject to corruption. But henceforth it

1 Cor. 10, 13.

Job 31, 3. Hist. Rom. 6, 12. is devilish and not 'human' temptation, when to that which the corruptibility of the flesh prompts, the mind attaches itself by the consent. Hence again he says, *Let not sin reign in your mortal body.* For he forbad not that sin should 'be' *in our mortal body*, but that it should 'reign in our mortal body.' Because in flesh as subject to corruption it may not 'reign,' but cannot help but 'be.' For this very thing to be tempted touching sin, is sin to it, which same because so long as we live, we are not perfectly and altogether without, holy preaching seeing that it could not wholly banish the same, took away from it its 'reign' from the dwelling-place of our heart, that the unlawful longing, though it very often secretly insinuate itself as a thief in our good thoughts, at all events should not, if it should even win an entrance, exercise dominion. Accordingly the holy man in saying, *I made a covenant with mine eyes, that I should not even think upon a maid*, would not at all be understood, that sin did not touch his mind in thought, but that it never mastered him by the consent. For he defends his soul as the most entire possession of God against the adversary's making a prey of it, who directly subjoins, *For what portion would God have in me from above, or what inheritance would the Almighty have from on high?* As though he said in plain words; 'In my mortal flesh indeed I am subject to the constitution of corruption; but wherein do I serve the Maker, if to Him I do not defend my mind whole and entire from the consent to sin? It goes on;

Ver. 3. *Is not destruction to the wicked? and estrangement to the workers of iniquity?*

iv. 8. The speedy comforting of the good is the end of the wicked had regard to. For while by the destruction of those they see the evil that they escape, they account as light whatever of adversity they undergo in this life. So then let the lost sinners now go, and satisfy the desires of their gratifications; in the sentence of their end they are destined to feel that in living badly they were in love with death. But let the Elect be chastened with a temporary infliction of the rod, that strokes may reform from their wickedness those whom fatherly pitifulness keeps for an inheritance. For now the righteous man is scourged and corrected by the rod of discipline, because he is being prepared for the Father's

estate of inheritance. But the unjust man is let go in his own pleasures, because temporal good things are supplied to him in the same degree that eternal ones are denied him. The unjust man, whilst running to a deserved death, enjoys pleasures unrestrained; inasmuch as the very steers too that are destined to be slaughtered are left in free pastures. But on the other hand the righteous man is restrained from the pleasantness of transitory gratification, because doubtless the steer too which is assigned to life for the purpose of labour, is held under the yoke. To the Elect, earthly good in this life is denied; because sick persons too, to whom there is a hope of their living, never have allowed them by the physician every thing they long for. But to the lost sinners the good things are granted, which they long after in this life, because to the sick too who are despaired of there is nothing denied that they desire. So then let the righteous weigh well, what are the evils that await the wicked, and never envy their happiness which runs past. For what is there that they should admire about the joys of those, when both themselves are by a rough road making their way to the Country of Salvation, and those as it were through pleasant meadows to the pit? Therefore let the holy man say, *Is not destruction to the wicked? and estrangement to the workers of iniquity?* Which same term of estrangement[1] would have sounded harder, if the interpreter had retained it in the parlance of his own tongue. For what with us is called 'estrangement' is among the Hebrews termed 'anathema.' And so there will then be 'estrangement' to the wicked, when they see that they are an 'anathema' to the inheritance of the Strict Judge, because here they set Him at nought by wicked practices. So then let the wicked flourish, strange to the flowering of the Eternal Inheritance. But let the righteous look to themselves with discreet attention, and in all their actions be in dread for that they are seen by the Lord. Whence it is fitly added directly;

[1] 'alienatio.'

Ver. 4. *Doth not He see my ways, and count all my steps?*

9. What does he tell of by the title of 'ways' but ways of acting? Thus it is hence said by Jeremiah; *Make your ways and your doings good.* But what do we understand[3]. v. Jer. 7, 3.

Jos 31, 3. Lit. by the name of 'steps,' but either the motions of men's minds or the advancements of merits? By which 'steps' Mat. 11, 28. indeed Truth calls us to Itself, saying, *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden.* For the Lord bids us 'come to Him' not surely by the steps of the body, but by John 4, 21. the advances of the heart. For He Himself says, *The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet* ver. 23. *at Jerusalem worship the Father.* And a little after, *the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father also seeketh such to worship Him.* Thus he implies that the steps are in the heart, when He both bids us that we should come, and yet declares that it is not at all by the motion of the body that we pass to other things. Now the Lord so 'views the ways' of each one, and so 'counts all his steps,' that by His Judgment not even the minutest thoughts or the very slightest words, which have become insignificant in our eyes from use, Mat. 5, 22. remain unexamined into. Thus hence He says, *Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.* 'Raca' in the Hebrew speech is a word of interjection, which indeed shews the temper of one who is angry, but does not give forth a full word of anger. Thus anger without utterance is first blamed, then anger with utterance, but not yet shaped by a complete word, and at last also when it is said, *Thou fool*, anger is reproved, which, along with excess of the voice, is fulfilled by the perfecting of speech as well. And it is to be noted that He tells that by anger he is 'in danger of the judgment;' by a voice of anger, which is 'Raca,' 'in danger of the council;' and by a word of the voice, which is 'Thou fool,' in danger of hell fire. For by the steps of offence, the order of the sentence increased, because in 'the judgment' the case is still under examination, but in the council the sentence of the case is now determining,' while 'in the fire of hell' the sentence, which proceeds from the council, is fulfilled. And therefore because of human actions 'the Lord counts up the steps' with exact scrutiny, anger without the voice is made over 'to the judgment,' but anger in the

voice ‘ to the council,’ and anger in speech and voice to ‘ the fire of hell. This exactness of His scanning the Prophet had beheld, when he said, *O most strong, Great One, Mighty Lord of hosts is Thy Name, Great in counsel, and Mighty in work, for Thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of Adam; to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his devices.* Jer. 32, 18. 19.

10. Thus the Lord scans those ways with exact scrutiny, that in each one of us He should neither pass over those good points that there are for Him to recompense, nor leave without rebuke the evil things, that are doubtless displeasing to Him. For hence it is that the Angel of the Church of Pergamos He at once commends in some things, and in some rebukes, saying, *I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast My Name, and hast not denied My faith.* And a little while after; *But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam.* Hence it is said to the Angel of the Church of Thyatira, *I know thy works, and thy charity, and faith, and service, and thy patience; and thy last works to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee; because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.* Observe how He records good things, nor yet lets go without penance evil things, that require to be cut off, surely because He so views the ways of each, and so takes account of their steps, ‘ counting them up,’ that by exact counting He thoroughly estimates both how far each one is advancing to what is good, or how far, by deviating to what is evil, he may contravene his advances. For the increase of merits which is heightened by the aims of a good life, is very often held back by a mixture of evil, and the good which the mind builds up by practising it overthrows by committing other things. Whence holy men tie themselves up with greater nicety in the thought of the heart in proportion as they see that they are more searchingly scanned by the Judge Above. For they sift the mind through and through, they seek to find if they have done wrong in aught, that they may be rendered the more

Apoc. 2, 13. 14.

ver. 19. 20.

Job 31, 5. 6. Hist. unblameable to the Judge, in proportion as daily and without ceasing they blame their own selves. Not, however, that they already derive from this circumstance the delights of security, because they see that they are beheld by Him, Who beholds in them those things as well, which they are not themselves able to see in themselves. And indeed blessed Job among those of old time maintained the life of perfectness, but because by the spirit of prophecy the stretch of his eye breaks forth to the Advent of the Redeemer, in that Redeemer's precepts he for himself reflects how many things belonging to perfection he is short of. Whence he also adds;

Ver. 5, 6. *If I have walked in vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit; let Him weigh me in an even balance, and let God know mine integrity.*

vi. Myst. 11. 'God to know' is said for His making us to know by a customary mode of our speech, who speak of 'a happy day,' by which it happens that we are made happy. For hence it is the Gen. 22, 12. Lord saith to Abraham, *Now I know that thou fearest God.* For it is not that the Creator of the periods of time learnt any thing from time, but His knowing is His affording the knowledge to us by the instant of each particular case emerging. But who is there represented by the name of 'balances,' saving the Mediator between God and man? In Whom all our merits are weighed with an even scale, and in Whose precepts we find what we have short in our own life. Now we are weighed in these balances as often as we are incited after the examples of His life. Thus it is hence that it is 1 Pet. 2, 21. 22. 23. written; *Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example, that ye should follow His steps, Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; Who when He was reviled, reviled not again, when He suffered, He threatened not.* Hence Heb. 12, 1. 2. it is said by Paul, *Let us run with patience the race that is set before us: looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, Who for the glory set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame.* Accordingly to this end the Lord appeared in the flesh, that the life of man He might by dealing admonitions arouse, by giving examples kindle, by suffering death redeem, by rising again renew. And so whereas blessed Job finds in himself nothing justly deserving

to be blamed, he extends the eyes of the mind to the life of the Redeemer, which surpasses all things, that he may learn by that how much he comes short, where he says, *If I have walked in vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit; let Him weigh me in an even balance, and let God know my simpleness.* As though he said in plain speech; 'If I have ever done aught lightly, if ever mischievously, may the Mediator between God and man appear, that in His life I may read whether I myself am really and truly simple.' For as we have said, he who had surpassed the men of his own times, sought for the Mediator between God and man, that by being weighed in Him he might find out whether he truly maintained a life of simplicity. Therefore let him say, *Let Him weigh me in an even balance, and let God know my simpleness*, which means, 'let Him cause me to know.' As though he made open confession, saying, 'As far as to the measure of man's life, I see now no points in myself deserving to be found fault with, but except the Mediator between God and man appear accompanied with the precepts of an exacter life, I discover not how much I am at variance with true simplicity.' Now the right order is observed if the foot be said first to have 'hasted on in vanity,' and afterwards 'in deceit.' For 'vanity' bears relation to levity, but 'deceit' to wickedness. And there are often persons, who are brought afterwards to things mischievous, because they do not in the first instance avoid what is light. It goes on; Book XXI.

Ver. 7. *If my step hath turned out of the way.*

12. So many times does 'the step go out of the way,' as our thought quits the way of the right, by the consenting of wandering. Now we as it were set as many 'steps out of the way,' as we are parted by bad desires from the delightfulness of the heavenly life. For as we have before stated, being still borne down by the load of corruptible flesh, we are not able to live in such a manner as that not any enjoyment of sin should be able to strike us. But it is one thing for the mind to be touched against its will, and another to be killed whilst consenting. But holy men guard themselves with more watchful solicitude in proportion as they take shame for being assaulted by the misdirected motions even of passing gratification. And hence it is yet further added; vii.

Job 31, 7. *And if mine eye hath followed mine heart.*

viii. Hist. Moral. 13. See again how by the keeping of inward vigour he returns to the training of the outward members, that if the heart should perchance covet aught forbidden, the eye being kept down by the tutorage of discipline may refuse to look at it. For as it often happens that temptation is derived through the eyes, so sometimes being conceived inwardly it forces the eyes to do service to it outwardly. Thus very often an object is regarded by a mind in a state of innocence, but by that mere look the mind is pierced through by the sword of concupiscence. For it was not (as we have already remarked for the sake of illustration) that David in this way looked of purpose on the wife of Uriah, because he had entertained the desire of her; but rather he lusted after her for this cause, because he beheld her without caution. But it happens by an inquest of right recompensing, that he who employs the external eye carelessly, is not unjustly blinded in the interior eye. Now oftentimes concupiscence rules in the interior, and the mind being seduced, after the manner of a despotism requires the senses of the body to drudge to its occasions, and obliges the eyes to serve its pleasures, and so to say opens the window of light to the dark of blindness. Hence holy men, when they feel themselves to be assailed by a wrong enjoyment, by the tutorage of discipline they withhold the very eyes themselves by which the likeness of the shape is introduced into the mind, lest the sight acting the pander should do the bidding of unhallowed thought. Which same if it ever be forborne to be guarded with nice particularity, uncleanness of thought presently passes into execution. Hence too it is directly added;

And if any blot hath cleaved to my hands.

ix. 14. Thus the holy man, knowing well that very often wrong thought comes into the mind through the eyes, said a little above; *I made a covenant with mine eyes that I would not even think on a maid.* Reflecting likewise that sometimes it springs up in the mind, while on its springing up so the eyes wickedly do service to it, he says, *If mine eye hath followed mine heart.* As though he said in plain speech, ‘ Neither did I wish to see in general things I might long after, nor in looking did I ever follow after the things

that I longed for.' So then let him say, *If mine eye hath followed mine heart.* Because even if his mind as being human ever did conceive aught unlawful, his eyes, bound down by the tutoring of higher discipline, it would not should follow it in things forbidden, and drudge to its service. Let us consider our own consciences with reference to these points, and what height this man was of let us see from the sunkenness of our own breast. See, if he did occasionally imagine things unlawful, because he speedily dispatched them within the depths of the heart with the sword of holy vigour, he suffered them not to reach so far as to deeds. Hence as we have set down before, he thereupon adds; *And if any blot hath cleaved to my hands.* For when does a blot cleave to the hands, i. e. sin to the actions, which sin the censorship of discipline did not suffer to make progress in thought? For neither is sin permitted to issue into act, if it be despatched inwardly where it has its birth. But if there is not a speedy resisting of temptation springing up in the heart, it is strengthened by that very delay by which it is fed, and coming forth without in deeds, it is with difficulty able to be overcome, because the very mistress of the members, the mind within, it holds a captive. Now because the holy man had brought forward all the particulars conditionally, *if* he had ever been guilty of these, he binds himself with a sentence of malediction, saying; BOOK XXI.

Ver. 8. *Then let me sow, and let another eat; let my offspring be rooted out.*

15. After the manner of Sacred Revelation we call it to 'sow' to preach the words of life. Thus it is hence the Prophet says, *Blessed are ye that sow upon all waters.* For the preachers of Holy Church he saw to 'sow upon all waters' because they bestowed the words of life, like grains of heavenly bread, upon all peoples far and wide. But to 'eat' is to be filled to the full with good works. Hence Truth saith by Itself; *My meat is to do the will of Him That sent Me.* So then, if the things that he gave forth, he forbore to do, he says; *Then let me sow, and another eat.* As though he said in plain words; 'What my mouth utters let not me but another man put in practice.' For the preacher who in his ways is at variance with his own words, sows going X. ALLEG. Is. 32, 20. John 4, 34.

Job 31, 8. Allegor. hungry what another may eat; because he is not himself fed by His own seed, when by wrong conduct he is made void of the rightness of his word. And because it very often happens that the disciples hear what is good to no purpose, when by the life of the master it is destroyed by the example of actions, it is rightly subjoined; *yea, let my offspring be rooted out.*

16. For 'the offspring' of the teacher is 'rooted out,' when he who is born by the word, is killed by the example, because him whom the heeding tongue begets, heedlessness of the life kills. For neither should we pass over with an 1 Kings 3, 19. insensible mind, that in Solomon the woman killed in sleeping the child, whom she was used to suckle being awake; in this way, because masters awake indeed in knowledge, but asleep in life, upon their hearers, whom they nourish by the watches of preaching, whilst they neglect to do the things that they say, through the sleep of insensibility inflict death, and by neglecting overlay those whom they appeared to be feeding with the milk of words. Hence generally whilst they live themselves in a blameable way, they are at once unable to have disciples of a praiseworthy life, and endeavour to draw over the disciples of others to themselves, that so, whilst they shew themselves to have good followers, in the judgments of men they may excuse the evil things that they do, and as it were by the life of those under them cover their deathdealing negligence. Whence in that place the woman, because she had killed her own, sought for another's child. Yet the sword of Solomon discovered the true mother, because surely what man's fruit may live or what man's die, the wrath of the Strict Judge in the final Judgment brings to light. Where this too is to be regarded with a discreet eye, that the child is first bidden to be divided whilst living, in order that afterwards it may be restored to the mother only, because in this life the disciples' life is in a manner allowed to be divided, whereas it is sometimes the case that from that life one man is permitted to have merit with God, and another man to have praise with men.

17. But the feigned mother did not fear for him to be put to death, whom she did not bear; because masters that are presumptuous and unacquainted with charity, if they are not

able to win the fullest character of praise from the disciples of others, hunt down their life with cruelty. For being set on fire with the firebrand of envy, they are not minded for those to live to others whom they see that they cannot themselves possess. Whence in that place the bad woman cries out, *Let it be neither mine nor thine.* For as we said, those whom they do not see to be at their command for temporal glory, they grudge should live to others through truth. But the true mother is at pains that her child may at least be with a stranger woman and live, because genuine masters yield it that by their disciples others indeed should have the praise of preceptorship, if, this notwithstanding, those same disciples do not lose wholeness of life. Through which same bowels of pitifulness this same true mother is known, because all tutorage is tested in the trial of charity, and she alone has earned to receive the whole, who as it were gave up the whole; because the faithful rulers, for this that they not only do not envy others' praise derived from their own good disciples, but also implore for them usefulness for advancement, do themselves receive back the children at once whole and living, when in the Last Inquest from the lives of those they obtain the joys of perfect recompensing. These things we have delivered in few words out of course, that we might point out in what way the offspring of hearers is through the negligence of the teachers made to be extinct; because whosoever does not live according to that which he speaks, uproots by practice from the stedfastness of righteousness those whom he has begotten by speech. But blessed Job never by his way of acting put an end whilst sleeping to those whom by his preaching he had brought forth whilst awake; and therefore he says with confidence, *Then let me sow and another eat, let my offspring be rooted out;* which same still examining himself touching the defilement of bad practice, adds;

ib. v. 26.

Ver. 9. *If mine heart has been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door.*

18. Though it sometimes happens that the sin of fornication is not at all different from the guilt of adultery, seeing that Truth saith; *Whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

xi.

Matt. 5, 28.

Job 31, 9. Hist. (For whereas an adulterer is called by the Greek word, 'mœchus,' whilst not another man's wife but a woman is forbidden to be looked at, 'Truth' openly shews that by the mere look alone, when only one that is unmarried is vilely lusted after, adultery is perpetrated.) Yet generally speaking the thing is differenced according to the situation or order of the person lusting, that is to say in this way, that purposed concupiscence in like sort defiles one in sacred orders, as the sin of adultery defiles that other. Nevertheless in persons not dissimilar, the same guilt of lust is made different, in whose case that the sin of fornication is distinguished from the guilt of adultery, the tongue of the great Preacher bears witness, who asserts amongst the rest, saying, 1 Cor. 6, 9. *Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers—shall inherit the kingdom of heaven.* For whereas he subjoins sentence to severally distinguished guilt, he shews how very greatly it differs from itself. By this then that is spoken, *If my heart hath been deceived by a woman*, the holy man is proved not even to have entertained a thought connected with the defilement of fornication. But by this that he adds; *Or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door*, he openly makes known that he was clear of the guilt of adultery. But perchance a person may say to this, 'What does the holy man assert extraordinary about himself, if he did preserve himself clear not only from the guilt of adultery, but likewise from the defilement of fornication?' But we rate these things at little, if we fail to consider the times of his virtuous achievements. For there had not as yet gone forth for the restraining of the flesh the stricter monitorship of revealed grace, which not only blames wantonness of the body, but also of the heart. There had not as yet gone forth the excellencies of chastity of numbers living in continence as patterns for our imitation, yet did blessed Job afford examples of purity, which he had not received. But by numbers even now after the prohibition of God there is impurity of the flesh committed. Accordingly it ought to be inferred from hence, seeing that so great an offence now even after the commandment is perpetrated in heavy matters, with what great praiseworthiness was abstinence kept before in heavy matters. And if he ever had done this thing, he

prays for that sin to be turned into punishment to him, saying; Book XXI.

Ver. 10. *Then let my wife be a harlot unto another, and let others bow down upon her.*

19. And because it is generally the case that that thing which in the doing of, we do not well consider how heinous it is, in the suffering it we do consider this; the force of that atrocity which, if he were guilty, he declares that he himself ought to undergo, he makes plain by expressing it, saying; xii.

Ver. 11, 12. *For this is an heinous crime; and the chiefest iniquity. For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and that rooteth out all increase.*

There is this difference between 'sin' and 'crime,' that all crime is sin, but not all sin is crime. And in this life there are numbers without crime, but no one can be without sins. And hence the holy preacher, when he was describing a man worthy of the grace of the priesthood, never said, 'if any be without sin,' but *if any be without crime.* But who can be Tit. 1,6. without sin, when John saith, *If we say that we have no sin* 1 John *we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.* In which 1, 8. same distinction of sins and crimes it deserves to be considered, that occasional sins pollute the soul, while crimes slay it; whence blessed Job in characterizing the crime of lust says, *It is a fire that consumeth to destruction*, in this way, that the heinousness of this atrocity not only stains to the length of defilement, but devours to the extent of destruction. And because howsoever many other good deeds there may be, if the enormity of lust is not washed out, they are overwhelmed by the immensity of this crime, he added going on, *and rooting out all offsprings*, for 'the offsprings' of the soul are good practices. Which soul, nevertheless, if the right order being reversed, the flesh exercises dominion over, all the things that are put forth well are consumed by the fire of lust. For before the eyes of Almighty God the works of righteousness and of pitifulness are none at all, which are shewn to view unclean by the infection of corruptness. For what does it profit, if a man heartily[1] com- [1] 'pie.' passionates the need of his neighbour, whilst he heartlessly[2] [2] 'impie.' destroys himself, being the habitation of God? So then if by purity of the heart the flame of lust be not quenched,

Job 31, 13. Hist. any virtues whatever spring up in vain, as it is spoken by Moses; *For a fire is kindled in Mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.* For 'a fire consumes the earth and her increase,' when lust consumes the flesh, and all things done well thereby. For whatsoever comes forth belonging to the fruitage of righteousness, this, surely, the flame of corruption burns up. So, then, let him say, *For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and that rooteth up all increase.* Because if there be no stand made against the mischief of corruptness, even those things assuredly come to nought, which seemed to be good. But some there are whom bad qualities are apt to bring down to humility, and good ones exalt to pride of heart. So then it is necessary for us to enquire, whether blessed Job in this extraordinary pureness of chastity was at the same time humble? Now the holy man, whilst he held the highest range of virtues, plainly discourses what low thoughts he entertained of himself, when he subjoins,

Ver. 13. *If I despised to submit to judgment with my man-servant or with my maid-servant, when they contended with me.*

xiii. 20. For he who did not refuse to be 'judged with men-servants and maid-servants,' clearly shews that against no fellow-creature was he at any time swoln with pride in himself. But herein it is interesting to remark with what circumspection the holy man preserved his life in all respects. For not far above he said, *The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to their throat.* While now he says; *If I have despised to submit to judgment with my man-servant or with my maid-servant, when they contended with me.* Who might be able proportionately to view these high counterpoises of virtues in this holy man? In whom there is so great authority of governance that princes are bound to silence, such lowliness of heart, that 'maid-servants' are permitted to come to 'judgment' on an equal footing. See how in a wonderful way he appears in power superior to princes, in contest on a level

Job 29, 8. &c.

with servants; in the assemblage of princes mindful of his office, in contest with domestics mindful of his creation. For he beholds himself a servant under the real Lord, and therefore he does not in loftiness of heart lift himself up above servants. And hence he adds directly;

Ver. 14. *For what shall I do, when God riseth up to judge; and when He seeketh, what shall I answer Him?*

21. He who thinks on the Judge to come, is unceasingly day by day preparing the cases of his accounts for the better: he who views the Eternal Lord with trembling of heart, is forced to abate the rights of temporal lordship over those under him. For he considers well that it is nothing that he is set above others in time, when for the rendering account he is beneath Him, Who exercises dominion without end. For oftentimes transitory power hurries away the soul along the steeps of self-exaltation. And because every one is lifted up in the degree that he sees that he is himself above any persons, it is needful that he ever have regard to Him, Who is above himself, that by the fear of Him, Who is above all things, he may keep down the growing inflation of mind within. For he knows who they are beneath himself, but let him consider under Whom he himself is, that by the considering of the true Lord, the swelling of counterfeit lordship may die off. Hence blessed Job, because he feared the Judgment of Him, Who is above all things, here comes to temporal judgment the equal of servants, saying, *If I despised to submit to judgment with my man-servant or with my maid-servant, when they contended with me. For what shall I do, when God riseth up to judge? and when He seeketh, what shall I answer Him?* Which same, that he might always keep down the heart in humility, never in these servants sees that the condition is unlike to himself, but that the nature is common. Whence also he adds, xiv.

Ver. 15. *Did not He Who made me in the womb make him? And did not One make us in the womb?*

22. To persons possessed of power, the equality of creation kept in the thoughts is great goodness of humility. For all of us men are equal by nature, but it has been added by a distributive arrangement, that we should appear as set over xv.

Job 31, 15. Hist. particular persons. So then if we keep down from the imagination that thing which has accrued temporarily, we find out the sooner that which we are naturally. For very often the power vouchsafed presents itself to the mind, and deceives it by high-swoln thoughts. And so by the hand of lowliest reflection the inflation of self-exalting must be kept under. For if the mind in itself descends from the top of the height, it quickly finds the level of the equality of nature. For as we have before said, nature has begotten all of us men equals, but, the order of merits varying, the secret appointment sets some above others. But the very diversity, which has been added from defect, is rightly ordered by the judgments of God, that whereas every man does not go the way of life in a like way, one should be governed by another. But holy men, when they are in authority, do not look to the power of station in themselves, but to the equality of creation, nor do they rejoice to be above, but to be of use to their fellow-creatures. For they know well that our old fathers are recorded to have been not so much kings of men, as shepherds of flocks. And when Gen. 9, 1. the Lord said to Noah and to his sons, *Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth*, He adds, *And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth*. For He says not ' be upon the men who were to be,' but, *be upon every beast of the earth.*

23. Since man is by nature set over the irrational animals, but not over the rest of mankind, and therefore it is said to him that he should be feared by the beasts and not by men; because it is to swell with pride against nature, to desire to be feared by an equal. Though very often even holy men desire to be feared by those under their charge, only however when they discover that by these their subjects God is not feared, that by dread of man at least they may fear to sin, who do not dread His judgments. Never then do they being set in authority swell with pride from this fear being sought, in that they seek therein not their own glory but the righteousness of those under their charge. For in this, viz. that they exact for themselves fear from persons living badly, they as it were rule not men but brute animals; because surely, in whatsoever respect those under authority are

bestial, in that respect they ought also to be bowed down under fear.

24. But when there is wanting evil, that may have to be corrected, they rejoice, not for the eminency of power, but for the equality of constitution, and they not only shrink from being feared by them, but also from being honoured beyond what is necessary. Nor yet do they think that it is a light loss to humility which they undergo, if perchance for their merit they be reckoned by them of too much rank. It is hence that the chief Shepherd of the Church, when on Cornelius worshipping him, he saw honour offered him which was above him, quickly refers to the equality of his creation, in the words, *Stand up, I myself also am a man.* For who does not know that man should be bowed down to his Creator, and not to man? Therefore because he saw that his fellow-creature humbled himself to him beyond what he ought, that the mind might not be made to swell beyond the boundaries of human nature, he owned himself to be 'a man,' that he might dash down the exaltation of the honour offered to him, by the equality of his creation being had an eye to. Hence the Angel, on being worshipped by John, owned himself to be a creature, saying, *See thou do it not, I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren.* Hence the Prophet, when he is caught away to see sublime things, is called 'Son of man,' that being carried to the heavenly scenes, he might remember that he was man. As though the divine voice admonished him in plainer words, saying, 'Remember what thou art, lest thou be exalted by those things, whereunto thou art caught up, but moderate the loftiness of the revelation by the remembrance of thy creation.' So then from this it is to be gathered, with what remembrance of a common nature the swelling of earthly power ought to be kept under in the heart, if by the name of man's nature it is effected that elevation of the heart should not be engendered by heavenly mysteries. Which same human nature blessed Job effectually kept the recollection of at all times, in that he says, *Did not He that made me in the womb, make him? And did not One fashion us in the womb?* As though he said in plain words, 'Wherefore should not we be examined on an equal footing in the trial of any matter, who are made

Acts 10, 26.

Rev. 19, 10.

Ez. 3, 1.

Job 31, 16. Hist. with equal conditions by the power of the Creator? But whereas we have made ourselves acquainted with the achievements of his chastity and of his humility, let us now acquaint ourselves with the deeds of his munificence. It goes on;

Ver. 16. *If I have denied what they wished for to the poor, or have caused the eyes of the widow to wait.*

xvi. 25. By these words the holy man is shewn not only to have ministered to the need of the poor, but also to their desire of having. But what if the poor wished those very things, which perchance it might not be for their good to receive? Is it that, because in Sacred Scripture the lowly are used to be called 'poor,' those only are to be accounted the things the poor wish to receive, which the humble seek? And surely it is required, that every thing should be unhesitatingly given that is asked for with true humility; i. e. whatsoever is begged for not from desire but from necessity. For it is to be henceforth very full of pride, to desire any thing beyond the limits of want. And hence it is said to James 4, 3. persons asking with pride, *Ye ask, and ye receive not, because ye ask amiss.* Because then they are genuinely poor, who are not blown out through the spirit of pride; which same 'Truth' plainly represents, when He says, Matt. 5, 3. *Blessed are the poor in spirit;* it is well said in this place by the holy man, *If I have denied what they wished for to the poor.* Because they that wish those things, which same it is clear are not expedient for them, by this alone, that they are overflowing with a spirit of pride, are not henceforth poor. But blessed Job, seeing that he called the humble 'poor,' refused not whatsoever the poor man was minded to receive from him, because every truly humble person did not even wish to have what it could not be that he ought to have.

26. But whereas he points out the bountifulness of his spirit, because he shews that he had met the poor to the wish, it is necessary that we enquire whether he had obscured the light of mercifulness by backwardness in the giving. Hence he subjoins; *Or caused the eyes of the widow to wait.* He would not have the widow that besought him 'to wait,' that not only by the gift, but likewise by the speediness of the gift he might increase the merits of good deeds.

Hence it is written elsewhere; *Say not unto thy friend, Go and come again, and to-morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee.* Now there are some that are used to bestow much outwardly, but rejecting the favour of a life in common, they shrink from having the poor their fellows in domestic intercourse. Hence blessed Job, that he might teach not only that he had given much without, but also to his own presence had received all the needy in domestic intercourse, adds directly; Book XXI. Prov. 3, 28.

Ver. 17. *Or have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof.*

27. That is to say, reckoning that he prejudiced his pitifulness, if he ate alone what the Lord of all created in common. Which same fellowship of intercourse should be carried on within the domestic walls with those persons, by whom the rewards of eternal retribution may be promoted. Whence the holy man describes himself as having had not any indifferent person, but, for eating, the 'fatherless' as his companions. But these extraordinary bowels of pitifulness whether he had derived from himself, or obtained them by the grace of his Creator, let him make known. It proceeds; xvii.

Ver. 18. *For from my infancy compassion grew up with me, and from my mother's womb it came forth with me.*

28. For though commiseration was a thing at his own command, that it should gain growth with himself, yet it is plain that it was not a thing at his own command that it should 'come forth from the womb along with himself.' Therefore it is plain that he attributes nothing to his own goodness, in that surely he bears witness that he received this same by the gift of his creation. The good then which he implies that he had derived from his creation, it is assuredly plain that he tells to the praise of the Creator, shewing that it was from Him and no other that he had obtained that he should be pitiful, from Whom he obtained that he should be; because as by his own act he was not created in the womb, so neither by his own goodness was he full of pity from the womb. But it is to be taken thought of by us that he declares; *it grew up with me.* For there are some who as they grow to years, go off from innocency. But whilst to the Elect the age of the body increases without, within, if it xviii.

Job 31, 19. 20, Hist. may be allowed to say so, the age of virtue increases. It goes on;

Ver. 19, 20. *If I despised any passing by, because he had no covering, and a poor man without clothing, if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep.*

xix. 29. Because he did not despise the poor, he displayed the virtue of humility; and because he covered him, of pitifulness. For these two virtues ought to be so linked together, as to be even supported by reciprocal practice; that so neither humility, when it reverences a fellow-creature, should abandon the grace of free giving, nor pity, when it gives, be made to swell high. Thus towards the need of a fellow-creature, let pity sustain humility, humility sustain pity, so that when thou seest one who is a sharer of thine own nature lacking the necessaries of life, thou shouldest neither through pitilessness cease to cover him, nor from pride cease to reverence him, whom thou dost cover. For there are persons who the moment they are entreated for necessaries by their brethren in need, afterwards intending to bestow gifts on them, first let loose words of insult against them. Which persons though in things they execute the office of pity, yet in words lose the grace of humility, so that for the most part it seems that they are now paying satisfaction for an injury inflicted, when after abuse they bestow gifts. Nor is it a thing of high practice, that they give the things that are begged for, because by the very boon of their giving they scarcely cover over that transgression of speech. To which persons is it well said by the book of Ecclesiasticus, *To every gift give not the bitterness of an evil word.* And again; *Lo, a word is better than a gift? and both are with a man that is justified*, i. e. that a gift should be exhibited through pitifulness, and a good word bestowed through humility. But on the other hand, others are not forward to support their needy brethren with things; but only to cherish them with soft words. Which persons the holy preaching of James strongly rebukes, saying, *If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled: notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to*

Ecclus. 18, 15. 16.

Jam. 2, 15. 16.

the body: what shall it profit you? Which persons John the Apostle also admonishes, saying, *My little children, Let us not love in word, neither in tongue: but in deed and in truth.* For our loving affection must always be shewn forth at once by respectfulness of speech, and by the service of almsgiving. Book XXI. 1 John 3, 18.

30. But it has very great efficacy for taming down the pride of a person in giving, if when he gives earthly things, he considers with good heed the words of the Heavenly Master, Who says, *Make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.* For if by the friendships of those we obtain everlasting habitations, assuredly we ought to reflect when we give, that we are rather offering presents to patrons, than bestowing gifts on the needy. Hence it is said by Paul, *That now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, and their abundance also may be a supply for your want.* That is, that we may heedfully consider, that those whom we now see in need, we shall one day see in abundance, and we, who are beheld abounding, if we neglect to bestow alms, shall one day be in need. He then who now gives temporal support to the poor man, hereafter to receive from him everlasting supports, so to say, for fruit as it were cultivates land, which pays back more abundantly what it has received. It remains then that exaltation should never spring up by benefaction, since, surely, the rich by that which he bestows on the poor man, brings it to pass that he should not be poor for everlasting. Accordingly, blessed Job, that he might carefully shew with what reflection humility and mercifulness were united together in him, says, *If I despised any passing by, because that he had no covering, and a poor man without clothing: if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep.* As though he said in plain words; 'In the love of a fellow-creature, keeping down by one and the same appointments both the evil of pride and of unpitifulness; any one passing by both humbly, on beholding him, I despised not, and mercifully I warmed him. For whosoever lifts himself above him that he gives any thing to with the height of self-exaltation, achieves a greater Luke 16, 9. 2 Cor. 8, 14.

Job 31. 21. Hist. offence by carrying himself proudly within than a recompense by giving alms without, and he himself is made bare of interior good, when in clothing the naked he despises him, and so brings it to pass that he is rendered worse than his very own self, in proportion as he fancies himself better than his neighbour in need. For he is less in need who is without a garment, than he who is without humility. Whence it follows, that when we see those who are sharers of our own nature without external things, we should reflect how many good things of the interior are wanting to ourselves, that so the thought of our heart may not exalt itself above the needy, in that it sees with an eye of penetration that we ourselves are the more really in want, in proportion as it is more inwardly.

31. And because there are some who cannot stretch the bowels of their compassion so far as to persons unknown to them, but pity those only whom they have learnt to pity by constancy of acquaintance, with whom, in fact, intimacy avails more than nature, whilst to particular persons they give things necessary, not because they are men, but because they are acquaintance, it is well said by blessed Job in this place; *If I despised any passing by because that he had no covering.* For to a fellow-creature unknown he shews himself compassionate, in that he calls him 'any passing by,' because, surely, with a pitiful mind nature has more avail than acquaintance. Since even every individual who is in want, by this mere circumstance, that he is a man, is not any longer unknown to him. It goes on;

Ver. 21. *If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, even when I saw myself uppermost in the gate.*

xx. 32. It was the custom with those of old that the elders should sit at the gate to make out by judicial trial the quarrels of persons at strife, in order that the city, in which it was befitting that they should dwell in concord, they should never enter at variance. And hence the Lord saith by the Prophet, *Establish judgment in the gate.* In this place then what is set forth by the title of the 'gate' but that thing which was used to be done in the gate? For as we talk of the 'camp fighting' instead of this, that there is fighting from the camp, so judgment that used to be carried on in

Amos 5. 15.

the gate, is called ' the gate.' Thus he ' sees himself uppermost in the gate,' who sees that by the title of just dealing he is of the better side in judgment. Accordingly, blessed Job, because he did not even then put forth his hand against the fatherless, when even by the claim of justice he saw himself the better one, teaching to us the rule of fear, says, *If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, even when I saw myself uppermost in the gate.* As though he said in plain words, ' Not even then had I the mind to enforce by power the interests of my own advantage against the fatherless, when I saw myself even by justice the better one in judgment.' For holy men, when they are subject to matters of disputings with inferior persons, whilst they are afraid to bear heavily even in the least circumstances, never shun to be themselves pressed upon contrary to justice. For they know that all human justice is charged to be injustice, if it be judged strictly by God. Whence that thing which is at their command, they guard against exacting with passionateness, lest it chance that the Righteousness Above try their actions with exactness. But that they may be able to be found just in the Divine Inquest, very often before the judgments of men they suffer themselves to be borne hard upon even unjustly. Now in relating the lofty height of his life, they are many and wonderful things that blessed Job delivered. But because it very often happens that the human mind refuses to believe the good things that it does not know how to put in practice, he directly adds the sentence of a curse upon himself, if aught of those things which he had spoken he did not fulfil in act, saying,

Ver. 22. *Then let my shoulder fall from its joining, and mine arm be broken in pieces along with its bones.*

33. Because bodily action is carried on by the shoulder and the arm, if the good things which he put forth with the lips he did not fulfil in deed, he wishes to himself ' the shoulder to fall,' and ' the arm to be broken in pieces.' As though he said in plain words, ' If the things that I said I refused to do, this very member of my body, which was given to me for working withal, may I lose, that surely that may fall from the body which I would not exercise to advantage.' But if this sentence of a curse is to be referred to a spiritual meaning, xxi.

Job 31, 22. Moral. it is doubtless plain that the arm is joined to the body by the shoulders, and as by the arm good practice, so by the shoulder the knitting together of social life, is denoted. Whence too the Prophet, regarding the holy peoples of the Church universal, that should serve God in concord, says, Zeph. 3, 9. *And they shall serve Him with one shoulder.* Herein then that he says, *If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw myself above in the gate.* He declares that he had preserved a wonderful force of patience, who declined not the being borne hard upon by the least considerable persons, no not when it was contrary to that which might justly be open to him. Which thing if he had not done, he adds, *May my shoulder fall from its joint.* Because, undoubtedly, he who is indifferent to observe patience, soon gives up a social life from impatience. For 'the shoulder falls from its joining,' when the mind, not being able to bear aught of contradiction, abandons brotherly concord, and it is as if a member were severed from the body, when he who might do what is good is cut off from the general unity of all the good. For never can concord be preserved excepting through patience only. For frequently there arises in human conduct occasion whereby the minds of men are liable to be reciprocally separated from their union and affection. And except the mind prepare itself for the undergoing things that are contrary, surely the shoulder does not hold fast to the body. Thus hence it is that Paul Gal. 6, 2. says, *Bear ye one another's burthens, and so ye shall fulfil* Luke 21, 19. *the law of Christ.* Hence Truth says by Itself, *In your patience ye shall possess your souls.*

34. Now upon the 'shoulder falling,' it is rightly subjoined, *Let mine arm be broken in pieces with its bones;* because without doubt all our practice, with whatsoever virtues it may seem to be accompanied, is undone, except that through the bond of brotherly love patience be preserved safe. For he foregoes to do good deeds of his own, who refuses to bear evil deeds of others. Since on being wounded by the heat of an angry spirit, a person recoils from loving, and when he does endure to be borne hard upon outwardly, he darkens himself inwardly by the light of charity being lost; nor does he now see where to stretch out the foot of good practice,

who has lost the eye of love. But 'the shoulder of the holy man does not fall from its joining,' in this way, because his loving affection does not depart from the concord of social life through impatience. And his arm is not broken, because all his practice is preserved in the joining of the shoulder, i. e. in the binding together of charity. Now with what thought present to him he did these good things of such great magnitude, and kept himself from all bad ones, he adds, saying, BOOK XXI.

Ver. 23. *For I always feared God like waves swelling over me, and I could not endure the weight of Him.*

35. From the terror that belongs to such a likeness let us reflect what wonderful force of fear there was in the holy man. For when waves swelling hang over us from on high, and when they threaten that death, which they bring down, there is then no concern for temporal things with the voyagers, no enjoyment of the flesh is brought back to mind. Those very things as well they cast forth from the ship, for the sake of which they took long voyages; all things are brought into contempt to their mind by love of living. Accordingly he 'fears God as waves swelling over him,' who whilst he desires the true life, despises all things that here he carries possessing. For when caught by a tempest, we as it were cast out the freight of the vessel, when from the soul that is overborne we remove earthly desires. And it comes to pass that the vessel being lightened floats, which by being loaded was sinking, seeing that doubtless the cares that weigh down in this life, drag the mind into the depth. Which mind is borne so much the higher amidst the billows of temptations, in proportion as it is more heedfully emptied of thought of this world. But there is another circumstance also that ought to be viewed with a regardful eye relating to the tossing of the sea. For when a storm arises, first slight waves, and afterwards greater billows are stirred up, finally the waves lift themselves up on high, and by their very height overturn all them that are at sea. Thus, thus surely does that last tempest of souls hasten that it may overwhelm the whole world. For now it shews us its beginnings by wars and havocs as by a kind of waves, and in proportion as we XXII. HIST.

Job 31, 23. Hist. are daily made nearer to the end, we see heavier billows of tribulations rushing in upon us. But at the last all the elements being in commotion, the Judge from Above when He comes bringeth the end of all things, because at that time surely the tempest lifts the waves to the heavens. Whence too it is said, *Yet a little while and I will shake not only the earth, but heaven also.* Which same tempest because holy men regard with lively attention, they as it were dread 'the waves swelling over them' day by day, and by these tribulations, which strike the world, they forecast what things may follow.

36. Now it is well added; *And I could not bear the weight of Him*, because he who views with mind engrossed the coming of the final Judgment, sees doubtless that such great terror is impending as he not only dreads then to see, but even now dreads that he foresees beforehand. For by the beholding of that great terribleness the soul quivers with dread, and turning aside the eyes of its attention, it refuses to behold that which it foresees. Therefore it is well said, *And the weight of Him I could not bear.* Because the power of the Majesty Above when It comes to Judgment, and the terribleness of that great Inquest, when the mind by considering endeavours to make out, directly falling back to itself, it is afraid at its having found it out. But herein it is to be considered that blessed Job says these things concerning himself after having been pained and smitten. If then at all events for the advancement of his merits he was so stricken, who so feared, how is he to be stricken, who despises? How shall the judgments of God weigh down those who lift themselves up, if even those they weigh down for a time, who always dread these things in humility? How shall he be able to endure the weight of God, who contemns, if this same weight even he underwent under the rod, who foresaw in fear. Whence with the utmost earnestness we ought to dread that inquest of so great strictness. Now it is plain that in this life, when he smites, if amendment follows the stroke, it is the discipline of a Father, not the wrath of a Judge, the love of One correcting, not the strictness of One punishing. And so by that very present scourge itself the

eternal judgments ought to be weighed. For hence we ought with the greatest pains to reflect, how that anger may be borne that casts away, if that anger of His which purifies may scarcely now be borne.

BOOK XXII.

All that remained of chapter thirty-one of the Book of Job is explained, and submissiveness of mind, and moderation, patience, charity, and earnest interest for those under our charge, are especially commended.

i. 1. THAT which has been often said by me already it is
HIST. not troublesome for me to repeat many times, since the
Phil. 3, great Preacher too says, *To write the same things to you, to*
1. *me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is necessary.* Blessed Job for this reason relates virtues achieved, because whilst caught between the words of rebuke and the wounds of the rod, he sees that his mind is being loosened from the assurance of hope. For he had heard from his friends upbraiding him that he had done numberless wicked things even, and lest his soul being driven hard by words and scourges simultaneously should break down into despair, by the recollection of his virtuous attainments he resets the same to hope, that it might never cast itself down in woe, in that it remembered that in the season of its repose it had done such lofty deeds. And so whereas we have told the reason of his purpose, it remains that we weigh with exactness his virtues so heard.

2. But this we are to have impressed upon us first of all, that he, who is supposed to be strong in any particular virtue is then really strong when he is not subject to evil habits in another quarter. For if he be under the dominion of evil habits in another thing, not even that is firm and solid wherein he was believed to stand fast. For each separate virtue is of less worth in proportion as the others are wanting. For very often it has happened to us to see some modest indeed but not humble, some seemingly humble but not pitiful, some seeming pitiful but not at all just, some in appearance just, but trusting in themselves rather than in the Lord. And it is certain that there is not even genuine

chastity in the heart of him who lacks humility, since by pride corrupting him within he commits fornication, if from loving himself he departs from the love of God. Nor is that true humility that has not pitifulness joined to it, because that has no right to be called humility which refuses to bend itself to sympathy with the affliction of a brother. Nor is that true mercifulness which proves a stranger to the right line of justice, for that which is able to be defiled by injustice, knows not assuredly how to have compassion on its own self. Neither is it real righteousness, which puts its trust not in the Creator of all things, but in itself perhaps, or in things created; since while one withdraws his hope from the Creator, himself overturns to himself the order of the highest justice. And so one virtue without another is either none at all or but imperfect. For that (as it has seemed best to some persons) I may speak of the four first virtues, viz. prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice, they are severally so far perfect, in proportion as they are mutually joined to one another. But separated they can never be perfect. For neither is it real prudence which has not justice, temperance, fortitude, nor perfect temperance which has not fortitude, justice, and prudence, nor complete fortitude which is not prudent, temperate, and just, nor genuine justice which has not prudence, fortitude, and temperance.

3. Accordingly blessed Job, because he had not one without another, but the virtues united together in himself, going over them severally makes them known. For telling the excellences of chastity, he says, *If mine heart have been deceived upon a woman.* c. 31, 9. And that he might shew that to that chastity the grace of humility was in no degree wanting, he adds after the rest, *If I did despise to undergo judgment with my man servant.* v. 13. And that he might shew that to his humility, mercy was joined, he says a little after, *If I have withheld the poor from their desire.* v. 16. And that he might shew that his mercy was descended from the root of justice, he promised a little above, saying, *If I have walked in vanity, or if my foot hath hasted in deceit.* v. 5 And that it might be shewn how alarmed he was at all things, how guarded towards all, he declares below, saying, *For I always feared the Lord as waves swelling over me.* Which same if

Job 31. 24. Hist. whilst placed in prosperous circumstances, and buoyed up by the abundance of good things, he had placed hope either in his own doings, or in the good things about him on every side, assuredly he would not be just. But when did this holy man place hope in himself, who says in express terms, c. 6, 13. *Lo, there is no help to me in myself?* What then now remains but that what feeling he held those very riches with, he should make known. Thus he says,

If I have made gold my strength, or have said to bullion, Thou art my confidence.

1 obryzum. 4. We give the name of 'bullion[1]' to gold in the rough. So then the holy man neither supposed 'gold' to be 'his strength,' nor that to him the 'bullion,' i. e. the mass of rude gold, was 'his confidence,' because resting his hope and satisfaction in the grace of his Creator alone, he sinned neither for the quantity of gold, nor yet in the kind thereof. For it would have been to have given up hope in the Creator, to have placed hope in the creature. But in uncertain Luke 12, 19. 20. objects that rich man had fixed his hope, who said, *Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.* But the Voice Above rebukes this man, saying, *Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?* For the same night he was taken off, who had looked for long times in the abundance of good things to him, that in this way he who, whilst hoarding up means for himself, was looking forward a long way, should never see the next day though but a single one. For it is in a manner to lay a foundation in running waters, to wish to settle an assurance of hope in things fleeting. For God for evermore standing still, all things pass away. What then is it to fly from One standing, but to attach ourselves to passing things. For who ever being seized by the swoln eddies of running waters could himself remain fixed, the water racing on downwards? Whosoever then shuns to run to nought, it remains that he eschew that, that does run to nought, lest by that thing which he loves he be driven to go on into that which he avoids. For he that attaches himself to things slipping away, is surely drawn thither, where that is making its way, which he holds. And so it requires first to be looked to that

a man love not things temporal, and next in those very temporal things, which he reserves to himself not for gratification, but for use, that he put not his confidence; seeing that by being united to objects running off the soul directly loses its own stay. For the wave of the present life draws away the man whom it lifts up; and he is wholly out of his senses, who is tossed adrift in the water, and yet tries to fix the sole of his feet. But there are very many who while they never place confidence in things transitory, yet when they are supplied to them in abundance for necessary purposes, are full of joy in secret feeling. Whence there is no doubt that every one is the less grieved that the things of eternity should be lacking, the more he is rejoiced that those of time are supplied to him; and he who grieves the less that temporal things are wanting, looks the more surely that eternal ones should be his. Accordingly this joy derived from things of earth, blessed Job, while testifying that he had not, adds, saying, Book XXII.

Ver. 25. *If I rejoiced over my great wealth, and because mine hand found much.*

iii. 5. For holy men in the wofulness of this pilgrimage, because that Appearance of their Creator, which they long after, they are not yet suffered to contemplate at all, account all the fulness of the present life as destitution, because nothing out of God suffices the mind which really seeks after God; and it is very often the case that to such persons their very abundance itself becomes exceedingly burthensome, because this thing alone they bear as a grievance, that in hastening to their country they carry many things on the journey. Whence it comes to pass that these things they devotedly share with their neighbours who are in want, in order that while this one gets what he has not, the other may lay aside what he had too much of, that neither the fellow-traveller may walk empty, nor that man whom it might delay on the way an overgreat burthen weigh down. And thus the Elect never rejoice for their great abundance, which same for love of their heavenly inheritance they either in bestowing distribute out of their hands, or by contemning forsake. It follows;

Ver. 26—28. *If I saw the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart hath secretly rejoiced,*

Job 31, 28. *and I have kissed my hand with my mouth; which is an exceeding iniquity, and denial against the Most High God.*

Hist. iv. 6. There is no doubt that both these two luminaries, which are commissioned to ministrations for man, are called 'the hosts of heaven.' Into the worshipping whereof we know that numbers have fallen, as Scripture is witness; as where it is written, *And worshipped all the host of heaven.* And because the sun and moon are seen in one way for use, and in a different way for worshipping, in that way in which they are wont to be worshipped by their votaries blessed Job tells that he had never 'seen the sun and moon, neither had his heart rejoiced; nor had he kissed his hand with his mouth.' By which act of kissing what else but the gratefulness of adoration is set forth? which thing if he had ever done, he calls it 'the highest iniquity and denial of God.' But after that he had related of himself in passages above such great heights of virtuous qualities, what does he now tell so strange, if he shews that he had not 'adored the sun and moon?' Whence it deserves to be considered, that after he testifies that he had not had confidence in gold, nor had rejoiced in much riches, he is further led on to things of a higher pitch, that he might instruct so much the more, the more exactly he tells things touching himself. Thus he says, *If I saw the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath secretly rejoiced.* What is called to 'see' in this passage, but to behold with desire? Whence the Psalmist saith, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.* Which iniquity, surely, could never be set forth in the mouth, if it were not 'regarded in the heart.' But it is one thing to see in the way of judgment, and another thing to see in the way of desire. Thus then blessed Job tells that 'the sun when it shined, and the moon walking in its brightness, he had never seen,' that he might shew that he had not sought after the appearance of the present light. As though after contempt of his earthly abundance, he plainly told us; 'why should I say, that I never at all rejoiced in gold, who in the very corporeal light itself never took delight? For holy men after that they set at nought all the enjoyments of the present life, in consideration of the sweetness of the light

2 Kings 17, 16.

Ps. 66, 18.

interior, turn away the mind from this light exterior as if from darkness; and they strive much with themselves within, that they be not carried away by the delightfulness of this light which shines outwardly. For if the visible light be incautiously delighted in, the heart is blinded to the invisible light, because in proportion as the soul is poured out in gazing out of itself, so much the more is it made to recoil in the interior regards. Hence all the wise-hearted, that by their corporeal senses they may not too much fall away to things without, by continual effort gather themselves up within the interior self by the hidden discipline of self-guarding, that they may be found the more whole within, in proportion as they are the less poured forth without. Thus by this vigorousness of discipline he had bound himself up within the depths of his own heart, who in fleeing the desire of the outward life, said, *The day of man I have not desired, Thou knowest.* The same, then, that by the Prophet is expressed, *The day of man I have not desired, Thou knowest,* this blessed Job declares concerning his own self in other words, viz. that he had not 'seen the sun when it shined, and the moon walking in its brightness,' and that he did not 'rejoice in these in the secret depths of his heart,' surely because he could not possibly 'rejoice' for those things which he 'saw' not in the desire of delighting. BOOK XXII. Jer. 17, 16.

7. But if these several particulars, which we have gone through, handling them according to the history, we also examine into in respect of the mysteries of allegory, what else do we in this place take the gold to be, saving the wit of a bright understanding? what 'fine gold' but the mind, which whilst it is fined clear by the fire of love, ever preserves in itself the brightness of beauty, by a daily renewal of fervour? For the mind knows not to wax old by inertness, which is bent by desire ever to be beginning. Thus it is hence that it is said by Paul, *renewed in the spirit of your mind.* Hence the Psalmist, who had already reached to the height of perfection, said as if beginning, *I said, now I begin;* in this way, because that, if we are not minded to flag and go off from good begun, it is very requisite that we should believe ourselves to be daily beginning. Nor is it at variance with the order of reason that we say that by 'gold,' man's ALLEG. Eph. 4, 23. Ps. 77, 10.

Job 31, 25. Allegory. wit is denoted; for as in ornamenting gold is laid under, the order of the gems may be arranged above, so the bright talents of the Saints are humbly laid below the benefits of God, and receive the gifts of graces set out in order upon them. And excepting that gold had a something of a like sort with wisdom, that wise man would never have said,

Ecclus. 20, 30. *Wisdom hidden from sight, and a treasure, that is not seen, what use is there in either?* Now holy men do not account 'gold' to be their 'strength,' because let them shine out with ever so great ability, they take thought that by their own powers they are nothing. And whilst they are powerfully able to see into all things, they desire first to understand themselves, that the light of their wit, like the sun, may first illumine the place where it arises, and afterwards all the other things to which it is made to open out in going on; lest if by applying themselves to know others they know not their own selves, the ray of the sun should there be darkened, where it rises. Accordingly, the goodness of their natural parts they apply to acquainting themselves with their own infirmity, and by acquaintance with their own infirmity they are the more effectually endued with power. And so the gold is not taken for 'strength,' if there is not confidence had in the wit wherewith they are endowed. Which Solomon

Prov. 3, 5. rightly advising of saith, *Put confidence in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not on thine own understanding.* So then let him say, *If I have made gold my strength, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence.* As though he avowed in plain terms; 'Neither what I really understood did I ascribe to my own parts, nor, if it chanced that I did any whit that was good, did I reckon such things primarily to my own mind:' who still more particularly telling us the humility of his heart, adds, saying,

Ver. 25. *If I rejoiced over my great riches, and because mine hand had found very many things.*

8. What do we fancy the 'great riches' so called in signification, but the abundant subtleties of counsels, which same 'the hand' of him that seeks 'finds,' in that the thought of him who deals thereunto produces them. For it was these 'riches' of wisdom that Solomon having before his eyes,

Prov. 14, 24. saith, *The crown of the wise is their riches.* Which same

person, because it is not metals of the earth but understanding that he calls by the name of 'riches,' thereupon adds by way of a contrary; *But the foolishness of fools is imprudence.* For if he called earthly riches 'the crown of the wise,' surely he would own the senselessness of fools to be poverty rather than imprudence. But whereas he added 'the foolishness of fools imprudence, he made it plain that he called prudence 'the riches of the wise.' These 'riches' of wisdom Paul viewing in himself and lowering his view by the thought of human infirmity, says, *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels.* Accordingly we find much riches in ourselves, when in searching into the sacred oracles, we receive the gifts of abundant understanding, and therein see a number of things, yet not at variance with one another. But it is not safe rejoicing to learn in the pages of God things either forcible or many in number, but rather to keep safe the things that we learn. For he that understands aright, sees what by so understanding he owes as a debt. Since the more he is enlarged in perception, the more heartily he is tied and bound to fulfilling deeds. Whence Truth saith in the Gospel; *For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.*

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2 Cor. 4, 7.

Luke 12, 48.

9. Therefore let us reckon understanding given like borrowed money, because the more we have entrusted to us in lovingkindness, the more we are held debtors in practice; and it very often happens that the same money of understanding received, when it is bestowed upon hearers for usury, is lost except it be given in a cautious spirit. For neither should it be slightly regarded in the book of Kings, that while the sons of the prophets were hewing wood on the Jordan, to one of them his ax-head having slipped off the handle into the deep water, disappeared from sight. For the iron on the handle is the gift of understanding in the heart: but to cut down wood thereby is to rebuke persons doing wickedly. Which same sometimes whilst it is done loosely, whilst the downfall of vain-glory in that same knowledge vouchsafed us is not avoided, the iron is lost in the water, because understanding is made witless by undone practice, which same understanding assuredly we know to be given for this end, that before

Job 31, 25. Allsg. 2 Kings 6, 5. the eyes of the Giver it may be rendered back by good conduct. Whence it happened rightly that he who had lost the iron exclaimed, *Alas, alas, my master, for it was borrowed.* For the Elect have this proper to them, that if at any time a furtive sin of vain glory creep upon them in their knowledge, they speedily turn back into their heart, and whatever they find in themselves worthy of condemnation before the eyes of the strict Judge, they follow hard upon with tears. Who whilst weeping, not only heedfully scan the evil things they have been guilty of, but what good ones as well they ought to have paid back for the benefit vouchsafed them, because surely they the more feel themselves sinners, in proportion as they are held debtors in the neglected good that they ought to have done. Rightly then did he who lost the iron cry out, *Alas, alas, my master, for it was borrowed.* As though he said, 'That by the undoing of negligence have I lost, which thing in order that I should pay it back by good works I received from the grace of the Lender.' But God never abandons the soul which owns itself in its sins in a true way. Hence too Elisha immediately on coming sends the wood down below, and raises the iron upon the surface; because surely our Redeemer regarding us with pity humbles the heart of a sinner, and fashions anew for him the understanding, which he had lost. He sinks the wood, and lifts up the iron, because He chastens the heart, and restores the knowledge. Whence it is well said in another translation, that he 'broke in pieces the wood' and cast it in, and so raised up the iron. For 'to break the wood in pieces' is to break up the heart from self-exaltation; to cast the wood below is to abase the uplifted heart in acquaintance with its own infirmity, as we said. And thereupon the iron is brought back to the top, because understanding returns for the service of the former mode of employment.

10. Therefore because the gift of understanding that is obtained, is with such numberless difficulties hardly kept safe (for there must be care taken that it be not deadened by inactivity, there must be care that in the exercising of practice it do not go out by the evil of self-elation,) holy men do not exult, when they learn the things for them to do, but when

they do the things they have learnt. And if in understanding they congratulate themselves in the benefaction of the Giver, yet sorrowing they take thought of the debt of practice, that is to say, that they may discharge by conduct what has been advanced to them in knowledge. For he is a foolish debtor, who receives rejoicing the money lent, and never minds the time when he must pay it back. But the joy of receiving is abated, when with prudential foresight the appointed season for paying back is thought on as well. Therefore because just men in the things which they perceive by lively attention are not lifted up by assured rejoicing, let it be said aright, *If I rejoiced over my great riches, and because my hand found very many things.* As though it were put in plain words; 'Never did I account myself rich by righteousness in this respect, that I knew right things, which I ought to do, even many in number; nor did understanding lift up the heart, because that the thought of the practice owed in debt kept down.' But it is to be borne in mind, that it very frequently happens that when a high pitch of understanding is received, the mind being very full of anxiety about itself is kept from the downfall of self-exaltation. But when the wonderful things it understands it begins to put in practice likewise, sometimes by the mere circumstance that it is made to display itself without, it slips, and glories that itself excels in its doings all the rest of the world. As, then, the 'gold' of understanding did not uplift blessed Job, so neither did the light of extraordinary practice either before the eyes of men lift him to a height. Hence too he fitly adds;

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If I saw the sun when it shined.

11. Since 'the sun in brightness,' is good practice in outward manifesting. For it is written, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Which is in heaven.* And again, *Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning.* For what in this passage is denoted by the 'sun shining,' is in the Gospel denoted by 'lamps burning.' For when good practice shines in the midst of faithless persons, 'a lamp burns' in the night, but when it shines out in the Church, 'the sun shines' in the day. For good practice if it be as yet such as bad men only

vi. Matt.5, 16. Luke12, 35.

Job 31, 25. Allego. wonder at, is doubtless a 'lamp' in the night; but if it so makes way that it may be admired by the good and more perfect kind, then it is the sun in the day time. When good practice shines by the active life of the body, it is as if after the manner of a candle light shineth out of an earthenware vessel. But when by the excellence of the mind alone it is raised up in contemplation, it is as if after the manner of the sun light is seen coming from heaven. Therefore because blessed Job had told of himself many good things appertaining to hospitality and mercifulness, which same surely he knew as still the least, in proportion as done in the bodily way of doing; recalling the eye of the mind to the topmost height of spiritual virtues, he remembered his own perfectness, and the light of examples which he gave to others in himself, he called 'the sun.' But there are some persons who when they do any good things, directly forget their wickednesses, and they fix the eye of the mind in the contemplation of the good practices which they exhibit; and henceforth account themselves holy, in the degree that amidst the good things that they do they shun the recollection of their evil deeds, in which perchance they are still entangled. Which same persons if with lively attention they marked the strictness of the Judge, would fear more for their evil things than exult for their imperfect good ones, would more look to it that for things that are still to be done they are held debtors, than that by practising some things they are already paying a portion of the debt. For neither is the debtor quit who pays back much, but who pays back all; nor does he attain to the prize of victory, who in a large proportion of the exhibition runs with speed, if on nearing the goal, in that which is left he goes off. Nor to persons going to any destined places does it avail when setting out to despatch a long way, if they are not at the same time able to achieve the whole of it. We then who are seeking the Eternal Life, what else are we about but performing a kind of journeys, whereby we are hastening onward to our country. But what does it matter that we despatch so many, if the rest which remain for our arriving we neglect?

12. Thus after the manner of travellers we ought not ever to look how much way we have already gone through, but

how much there remains for us to carry through, that by slow degrees that may become past and over, which is unceasingly and fearfully marked as still to be. Therefore we ought much more to survey what good things we have not yet done, than those good things which we are glad that we have already done. But human frailty has this belonging to it, that it is more attractive to it to look at that which pleases it in itself, than that which displeases it in itself. For the sick eye of the heart, while it dreads to be put to pains in its contemplation, as it were asks for a kind of bed of delight in the mind, where it may lie softly; and for this reason it makes out what benefits it has secured by the good things it has done, but what losses it sustains from those which it has left undone it is blind to. For it very often happens that even the Elect are tried by this evil, very often it is put to the hearts of those, that the several good deeds which they have done they should recall to mind, and exult now in the joyfulness of security. But if they be really Elect persons, from that in which they are pleasing to themselves they turn away the eyes of the mind, and force down in themselves all joyfulness for the good things they have done, and for those which they perceive that they have never done they seek out sorrowfulness, they account themselves unworthy persons, and are almost the only ones that do not see the good things, which they afford in themselves to be seen for an example to all men. It is hence that Paul, when he was putting behind him the good things completed in himself, and thinking of those only still remaining, that had to be completed, said, *I count not myself to have apprehended.* It is hence that in order that he might abase himself as to the good things he was doing, he set himself to recall to mind the evil things that were past, saying, *Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious.*

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Phil. 3, 13.

1 Tim. 1, 13.

13. And even if he at any time said, *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith;* we ought above every thing to turn our eye to the fact, that he brought the thing forward at that time when he knew that he was now about to depart out of the body. For he there premised, saying, *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.* For then he

2 Tim. 4, 7.

v. 6.

Job 31, 25. Alleg. recalled to his recollection the perfectness of his practice, when he now foresaw time for practising no more to be his as to a field of large extent. For as whilst we live we are bound to drive out of our recollection our good deeds, that they may not lift us up, so on our departure drawing nigh, we very often bring them again to our recollection, that so they may afford us confidence, and keep down despairing fear. Who though in reckoning up he related his good points to the Corinthians, was bent to confirm them, and not to make a display of himself. For that he paid no regard to the same good points in himself, he taught by the affliction of his own tempting being laid open, which being set forth, he added, *Therefore I take pleasure in mine infirmities.* So then that he might instruct the disciples, he told what was most high of himself, while that he might keep himself in humbleness, he had fixed the eye of his observation not in his virtues but in his weaknesses. Accordingly, holy men have this proper to them, that the good things they do they see indeed, yet when they have done them they turn away their eyes from the remembrance thereof. Whence it is rightly said by blessed Job, *If I saw the sun when it shined.* As though he said in plain speech; 'My practice, even when it afforded the light of examples to others, I minded not for the boon of foreassurance; because whilst I feared to be uplifted on the grounds thereof, I turned mine eyes away from regarding it.' It goes on;

2 Cor. 12, 10.

And the moon walking in her brightness.

vii. 14. After the sun had been premised, he justly likewise added, 'the moon walking in her brightness,' because after good practice there follows the praiseworthy report whereby a name of renown is won in this night season of the present life. But if that be true which some think, that the moon through his hidden circuit receives illumination from the ray of the sun, so that she should be able to display light by the courses of the night, this supposition likewise is not at variance with the order of this representation. For fame gains its means from good practice, and it spreads the esteem of applause like the brightness of light. There is also another thing in the moon, which may agree in likeness with fame spreading good. For the light thereof even in the season of darkness shews

the road to persons going afoot, because both whilst the light of praise shines out from another's life, it lightens others for the exercising of good practice; and when the esteem of the one is seen in a clear light, to the other as it were going his way upon a journey the light of example is afforded. But it sometimes happens that the practice which is derived from the esteem of another man is framed with an aim not duly pure in the mind. For weak minds when they hear good things of others, sometimes kindle themselves to right practice not by the love of virtue, but the delightfulness of applause. And indeed it is evident that as it is the nature of the sun that whatsoever things it touches it burns and dries up, so it is the property of the fire of the moon that whatever it touches, it burns indeed, but in so burning renders the thing moist. Thus then to a good life, some an affecting of good practice for the love of God kindles and inflames, whilst others the love of praise. But when we are set on fire with an affection to right practice, we are as it were dried up by the fire of the sun from the humidity of evil habits. While him whom the love of praise prompts to good practice, fame coveted touches like the moon, because his mind it at once inflames and unlooses. That is to say, it inflames him to the exercising of practice, but unlooses him to the desire of applause. Yet very often for the exercising of good deeds the examples of others influence us to good effect. And when we adopt the good of another's reputation with a humble mind, we either advance our own good things for the better, or change the bad to good; and when the brightness of fame from the life of our neighbour sheds its rays on ourselves, our mind, as we before said, which is guiding itself with a view to winning the way of virtue, sets the steps as it were in the light of the moon. But as we make way by the esteem of another, so it very often occurs that if we give heed to the praises of our own fame, we are emptied of virtue, because when the mind is made to take delight in that which it sees to be held without concerning it, it loses sight of that, which it was panting for within.

15. Therefore because the understanding of knowledge did not corrupt the holy man, he held it beneath him to rejoice in his great riches. Now because the greatness of his prac-

Job 31, 26. Allegory. tice did not puff him up, he 'saw not the sun when it shined;' and because neither did the credit of applause uplift him, he never 'regarded the moon walking in its brightness.' For there are some persons who are brought down into self-exalting in the degree, that by a nice understanding they find out good things even that they do not do. These, surely, 'rejoice over great riches,' when by making out they discover any things of the highest, and by those self-same discoveries are spoilt in self-exaltation. But there are some persons whom understanding does not indeed uplift, but the practice set forth exalts, who whilst they regard their own doings in their own heart by shewing disdain, set the rest of the world in the background to themselves. These same, though they do not rejoice in great riches, yet 'see the sun when it shineth,' because upon the greatness of good practice alone, they as it were swell themselves out despising others. And there are some whom not even their own practice uplifts, but when they begin to be commended by their fellow-creatures for that same good practice, being overcome by the mere applause of men, by themselves they view themselves as certain great ones in their own imagination, and are unbound from the safe keeping of the heart. These, surely, though they refused to 'see the sun when it shineth,' yet 'behold the moon walking in its brightness;' because amidst the darkness of this world, while they fasten the mind on the brightness of their reputation, as it were by the light of the night they lose the grace of humility, and, whilst beholding the moon, they see not themselves, in that they begin to be blind to themselves, while they fix the eyes of the mind on transitory applause.

16. Now so is the progress of men, as we see the growths of trees to be. For the essence of the future tree is first in the seed, afterwards in the springing, and at last it is carried out into boughs. Thus then, surely the goodness of every one doing works grows up. For it is sown in understanding, it springs up in practising, and at last it is consolidated to the full width of great advancement. But when his understanding uplifts any one, the tree that might have sprung up rots in the seed. And when after good practice he is spoilt by the bane of self-exaltation, it is as if, having

already sprung up, it withered. But when neither understanding nor practice corrupt, but its greatness growing up, when the applause of persons commending follows, and overturns from its seat the mind of him that doeth rightly, the tree has encountered the winds of the tongues, and all that had grown up strong in it, the tempest of fame has plucked up by the roots. For in proportion as the tree has risen higher to the regions above, forcibly does it feel the violence of the winds; because the more a man is lifted to a height in good practices, with so much the greater blast is he oppressed by the mouth of those that praise him. Therefore if the tree is still in the seed, there is need to fear lest it should be made rotten by the mere acquaintance with knowledge; if it has now already issued into a shoot, we have to be on our guard that the hand of self-exaltation touch it not, and parch it of the greenness of its conduct; but if it already lifts itself up on high with vigorous strength, it is very greatly to be dreaded lest the over strong wind of praise that is applied pluck it up from the roots.

17. But herein it is necessary to be borne in mind, that, to the end that we be not rooted up by immoderate praises, very often, by the marvellous regulating of our Ruler, we are allowed to be torn in pieces by calumnies even, that so when the voice of one commending lifts up the heart, the tongue of one calumniating should abase it, because the tree too oftentimes, which is so driven by the impulse of one wind as to seem now that it might well nigh be rooted out of its place, is set up again by a blast of another wind from an opposite quarter; and the tree which suffered bending from this side, is brought back from another to its standing position. And hence that tree, being deeply rooted, had as it were stood fixed amidst contending winds, which said, *By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report.* 2 Cor. 6, 8. For it often happens that praise being unwontedly brought home to the ears of the well doer, whilst it echoes in talkings without, engenders to the mind within a kind of tempest in silence, and it comes to happen that this thing, that the soul is delighted by the applause of men, it does not easily display outwardly, but yet it feels the force of corruption in no slight degree inwardly. And there are some whom praise

Job 31, 27. Allegorically. so puffs up that it forces them on even to words of self-exalting. But some, as we said before, are ashamed to lay open this same thing, that they are lifted up, and their encomiums being heard by them they are exalted, but yet do not come forth to the extent of words of exaltation, and never shew openly that they delight in such things. Hence blessed Job, because he knew that he had not been arrogant not only at all in words, but also in the secret thought of the heart as well, after that he said, *If I saw the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in its brightness;* therefore added;

Ver. 27. *And my heart rejoiced in secret.*

viii. 18. By which same recording, what else is conveyed to us, but that there is need of great fear and circumspection, lest our mind at any time rejoice even in secret on the grounds of its commendations. For that man who looks on the greatness of his fame as 'the brightness of the moon,' and creates delight to himself in the secret of the heart, to whom but to the Maker did such a man prefer himself, by Whose gift he obtained it that he should practise aright, and yet in His benefit is made glad upon the favour of his own praise? For the honour of his Creator being disregarded, he is convicted of loving himself more, by the proclaims of whom he is so gladdened. Though sometimes even holy men rejoice in their own good repute; but when they reflect that through this good repute those that hear them advance to better things, they now no longer rejoice in their own reputation, but in the profiting of their neighbours; because it is one thing to seek marks of favour, and another thing to exult on the ground of advancement. Wherein it follows, that when it does not advance the welfare of the hearers, fame for credit should not lift up, but oppress our mind. For when we are commended by the witnessing of the human tongue, we are asked by a secret smiting what we think concerning our own selves. For the uplifted soul, even when false good is told concerning it, exults, because it makes out in thought not how it lives with God, but how it makes itself known with men. For disregarding the judgment of Almighty God concerning itself, and only seeking after that of men, it is lifted up amidst the praises

it hears, and the soul which had looked out for this alone is gladdened as if by the prize of its practice. But on the contrary if the heart be really humble, the good things that it hears of itself it either does not at all acknowledge, and is afraid that false things are said, or otherwise if it knows that they are really there to it, dreads lest they should be lost to the eternal recompensing of God, by this alone that it sees them to be published abroad to men; and it fears very greatly lest the hope of the future reward should be changed into the wages of transitory applause.

19. From which circumstance it takes place that the soul of the Elect is tortured by a great fire of their own praises, and by sorrowfulness of thought fined clear of all the rust of its inertness. For by heedful taking thought it is filled with fear lest either for those things, in the which it is praised, and they do not exist, it should meet with a worse judgment of God, or for those things wherein it is praised, and they do exist, it lose the suitable reward. Whence it most commonly takes place that like as the unjust man is defiled by his praise, so the just person is purified by his praise reaching his ear. For when the good things he has done he finds out are put forward by men, he dreads, as has been said, the exact inquest of the Final Judgment upon himself, and full of affright flees to the conscience, and whatever there is therein worthy of blame, he corrects. For while he dreads to have his good things made known, fearing greatly the exactness of the Inquest to follow, if there be any hidden evil things in him, he cuts them away. For he is alarmed if he be not exhibited at least such to God, as he is held by men, neither is he satisfied that in that state in which he may have been made known to men he should continue to remain. For already he reckons compensation as it were made to him for his good things, except he add thereto others also which are not known by men. Whence it is well said by Solomon; *As silver is tried in the fining pot and gold in the furnace, so man is tried by the mouth of him that praises.* Prov. 27, 21. For silver and gold if it be refuse is consumed by the fire, but if proof, it is brought out by the fire. Thus surely is the mind also of him that worketh. For what sort of man he is, is shewn herein that he is praised; for if when

Job 31, 27. Allegory. his praises reach his ears, he is uplifted, what else was such an one but refuse gold or silver, whom surely the furnace of the tongue consumed? But if on hearing the marks of favour towards him, he returns to the consideration of the Judgment Above, and entertains fear lest he should be heavily charged for these things in the sight of the secret Arbiter, as it were by the fire of purifying he is made to grow to greatness and splendour, and from the same source whence he undergoes the burning of affright, he shines so much the brighter. Therefore blessed Job, because he never preferred himself on the ground of practice, says with confidence, *If I saw the sun when it shined.* And because fame to his credit never diverted this man from the regarding of the Interior Judgment, he adds, *And the moon walking in her brightness.* And because he never suffered, not even in secret thought, that his mind should be mastered by the boon of his repute, he directly added, *And if my heart rejoiced in secret.* And because it very often happens that the unheeding mind, when it does not set itself against transitory applause, is drawn on even to this pass, that it praises itself what it does, to the condition which was set before it is in a manner fitly annexed;

And have kissed my hand with my mouth.

ix. 20. For by the 'hand' doing is denoted, and by the Prov. 19, 24. 'mouth' speaking; as when it is said by Solomon, *A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and it is labour to him to bring it to his mouth.* To the slothful man it is a labour to stretch his hand to his mouth,' because the slothful preacher has no mind to practise even the very thing that he says, Since to stretch the hand to the mouth, is to harmonize with his voice in practice. And so he 'kisses his hand with his mouth,' who praises the thing that he does, and by the testimony of his own speech awards to himself meritoriousness of practice. In which case who is there that is despised, saving He Who bestows the very gifts for practising themselves? Whence it is well said by the great Preacher; 1 Cor. 4, 7. *And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?* Now holy men know themselves to be sprung since the fall of our first parent from a corruptible

stock, and that not by their own goodness, but by grace from above preventing them they are changed to better wishes and works, and whatever of evil they find to be in them, they feel is earned by mortal derivation, but whatever of good they espy in themselves, they acknowledge as the gift of immortal grace, and they are made debtors to Him for the benefit vouchsafed, Who both by preventing vouchsafed to them to will the good that they willed not, and by following after vouchsafed them to be able to do the good which they will. Whence it is well said by John; *And worshipped Him That liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne of the Lord.* For 'to cast their crowns before the throne of the Lord' is to attribute not to themselves but to the Maker the victories of their conflicts, so as to refer the glory of praise to Him, from Whom they know themselves to have received powers for the conflict. And so blessed Job, because he so tells the good things that he had practised, that, nevertheless, he never attributes them to his own doing, but goes back to the praise of his Creator, denies that he had 'kissed his hand with his mouth.' As though he said in a plain way, 'I do not bring forward my deeds as mine own; because he is proved to disown the grace of his Creator, whoever attributes to himself the thing that he does in practice.' And hence he adds directly;

Book XXII.

Rev. 4, 10.

Ver. 28. *Which is the chiefest iniquity, and denial against the Most High God.*

21. For it is clear that he does deny Him, when setting at nought His grace, he claims to himself the powers of good practice. Which too is rightly called as well 'the chiefest iniquity' because every act of sin which is from infirmity destroyeth not hope, seeing that it asks forgiveness from the Judge Above. But presuming on our own goodness is so much the worse in desperateness, the further it is removed from humility. And when it ascribes the strength of practice to itself, it does not have recourse to the aid of the Maker, and it is brought to pass that the sinner perishes so much the worse, for that even this very thing, that he is a sinner, he is ignorant of. It follows;

x.

Job 31, 29. Ver. 29. *If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found me.*

Hist. xi. 22. That we are disciples of Almighty God, the keeping of charity is the only proof. For it is hence that Truth saith

John 13, 35. by Itself, *By this shall all men know that ye are My Disciples, if ye have love one toward another.* Which same love, if it really fills our heart, is wont to be exhibited in two ways; viz. if we at once love our friends in God, and our enemies for God. But it needs to be known that the love of our enemy is then really kept, when we are neither given up to

[1] 'addicimur.' suffering[1] upon his advancement, nor rejoiced at his destruction. For very often in a semblance of love with reference to an enemy, the mind is deceived, and such an one it reckons that it loves, if it do not prove a foe to his life; but the efficacy of love either the promotion, or the fall of an enemy, secretly and really puts to the proof. For on this point the mind of man knows not itself to the full, except that him whom he takes for an enemy to him, he finds whether by advancement or diminution to have changed the measure of his standing. For if he is given over to suffer by the prosperity, and rejoiced by the calamity of him who hates him, it is plain that he does not love him, whom he does not wish to be better; and him he persecutes, even when standing, in wish, about whose fall he congratulates himself.

23. But herein it is needful to know that it very often happens that without charity being lost, both the destruction of an enemy rejoices us, and again his glory without any sin of envy saddens us, when both he falling to ruin, we believe that there are persons rightly set up, and he being advanced we dread very many being unjustly borne down. In which case neither does his diminution now lift up our mind, nor his aggrandisement give it over to suffer, if the right thought of our heart regard not what is done in the individual, but what is done by the individual towards others. But for preserving these things a scrutiny of the exactest discrimination is absolutely requisite, lest when we are carrying out our own hatred, we be deceived under the appearance of the utility to another. For if there were not to be any

rejoicing at all for the death of an enemy, the Psalmist would never say, *The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance on the ungodly.* For it is one thing to bear an ungodly man, and another thing to bear an enemy. For there are a great many enemies that are not ungodly, and there are some ungodly persons who seem not in any special manner enemies to us. But the mind of man accounts every one whom it bears as an enemy, to be ungodly and wicked as well, because the faults of that man spleen as his accuser heightens in its own thinking. But with whatever wickednesses he may be sunk down, he little passes for wicked, if he is not felt to be an adversary. In which point there must be the distinguishing, that it is one thing wherein our enemy harms ourselves, and another thing wherein he harms himself and the rest of the world. For if he is good to others, perchance it may be that it is not without our fault that he is bad to us; nor should there be altogether a rejoicing in his ruin now, whose hostile treatment it is certain we alone have undergone. But when the enemy of ourselves and a great many persons is destroyed, it must needs be that our heart should be glad for the escape of our neighbours, rather than for the destruction of our enemy. Book XXII. Ps. 58, 10.

24. For it is requisite that when an adversary perishes we should minutely consider both what we owe to the destruction of the sinner, and what to the justice of the smiter. For when Almighty God smites any bad man, there must be sorrowing in unison with the wretchedness of the ruined, and rejoicing in unison with the justice of the Judge, so that both the punishment of our neighbour dying should be a sorrow to us, and again the equity exhibited by God in judging should be an occasion of joy, that so we may neither prove enemies to a man in his perishing, nor be found unthankful to God in His judging. And so because he perfectly trod down all feelings of hatred in opposition, let blessed Job say, *If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him.* Who, that is to say, in loving even his enemy, whereas he sympathized with an adversary when ruined, by that one's evil things was himself advanced to good, that this one should go on growing to loving-kindness by the same cause that the

Job 31, 30. Hist. evil that he deserved had found that other. But because often there are persons who because they cannot with power, assail with cursing those whom they account enemies to themselves, in which persons it appears plain what evil things they would do if they could, who never cease to imprecate those which they cannot do, blessed Job exhibiting himself free from the sin of cursing as well, added, going on,

Ver. 30. *Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul.*

xii. 25. For he would sin, if he were to desire that to be done by God, which he himself either could not at all be able to do, or if he could it would not be in any wise right. For they who assail an enemy with curses, what other thing do they wish God to do in his case, but what they are either unable or ashamed to do themselves? For they wish death to their enemy, which same even if they have the power, they are afraid to bring upon him; lest they should either be bound as guilty of murder committed, or shew themselves wicked even when they are. What then is it to say to God, 'Kill the man whom I hate,' but to cry out to him in audible accents; 'Do Thou that to mine enemy, which it is not proper for me to do towards him even as a sinner.' In which same words it is to be thought where had this person read, *Love your enemies?* where had he read, *Bless, and curse not?* and again, *Not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing?* But the precepts of grace from above, not heard with the outward ears he observed, because the inspiration of the Holy Spirit wrote them in the heart of that man. To whom however it would have been but little that he loved those adversaries situated without, excepting he had to bear these also living within, and holding daily converse with him, even those of his household, as adversaries. Whence he adds,

Luke 6, 27. Rom. 12, 14. 1 Pet. 3, 9.

Ver. 31. *If the men of my tabernacle said not, O that we had of his flesh, that we might be satisfied!*

xiii. Myst. 26. Which same sentence may also be taken in mystery of the voice of our Redeemer. For 'the men of his tabernacle' longed to be 'satisfied by his flesh,' i. e. whether the Jews in persecuting or the Gentiles in believing. For both the one set themselves as it were by consuming it to put an end

to His Body, and the latter desire to satisfy their hungering soul with His flesh, by the daily sacrifice of His immolating. But now following the gist of the history alone let us reflect with what strenuousness the mind of the holy man, full of concern for all things, is divided within and without; who to those acting unjustly had he either submitted in silence, or not withstood in righteous living, assuredly he would never have had them as adversaries. But hereby, that he kept the paths of life, he found hearty desires of his death. Adversaries he met with, shewing themselves outwardly, lurking inwardly. Now it is inferior goodness in a conflict for a man to see without evils that he has to get the better of, and not to have within aught that he may have to bear. But it is the praise of perfect greatness to meet hostile treatment, without bravely, and within mercifully. For there are some things in the actual common dealing of those of a household, that cannot be corrected without sin in the corrector, and therefore when they either defile him who corrects them, or do not weigh heavily on him who does them, with a great skill of tutoring they require to be winked at, and by this very winking to be borne with, which same when put upon ourselves are the more quickly dismissed from our hearts, if we know our own misdemeanours against our neighbours. Whence it is well said too by Solomon; *Take no heed to all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee: for oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself also hast cursed others.* For whilst we reflect what we have been towards others, we are the less concerned that others should have proved such persons towards ourselves, because the injustice of another avenges in us what our conscience justly accuses in self. It proceeds;

Book XXII. Hist.

Eccles. 7,21.22.

Ver. 32. *The stranger did not lodge in the street; but my door was open to the traveller.*

27. Whereas, Paul being witness, charity is described as patient and kind, by patience it bears with composure the ill turns of others, by kindness it also renders with mercifulness its own good ones. Whence blessed Job at once patiently bore those of his own household cursing him, and received to him kindly the travellers and strangers, to the first affording examples of morals, the other meeting with the

xiv.

succour of external things. For the holy man viewing by the Spirit of prophecy the Redeemer of mankind, also kept his pardoning words in practice, whereby He warns us, saying, *Let go, and it shall be let go to you; give, and it shall be given unto you.* For our giving relates to the things which we have outwardly, but our letting go to the dismissing the grief, which we have inwardly contracted by the offence of another. But it requires to be known, that he who 'lets go' but does not 'give,' though he has not done to the full, yet has observed the better part of mercifulness. But he who 'gives' but never 'lets go' does not execute mercy at all; because by Almighty God the gift is not accepted from the hand, which is proffered by a heart tied and bound in wickedness.

Job 31, 32. Hist. Luke 6, 37.

28. For there is need for the soul that offers alms first to be made clean, because every thing that is given to God is reckoned according to the feeling of him who gives it. Therefore every stain of evil must be wiped clean from our interior man by the changing of the thought, because the offering has it not to appease the wrath of the Judge, except it be acceptable by the purity of him who offers it. Whence it is written; *And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offerings; but unto Cain and to his offerings He had not respect.* For it is not that sacred Revelation says that 'He had respect to the offerings of Abel, but to the offerings of Cain He had not respect;' but he first says, that *He had respect to Abel*, and afterwards subjoined, *And to his offerings.* And again he says that *to Cain He had not respect*, and next added, *nor to his offerings.* For according to the heart of the giver is the thing that is given received. Therefore not Abel by virtue of his offerings, but by virtue of Abel the gifts offered were well pleasing. For it is read that the Lord had regard first to the person who gave, before the things which he gave. Hence blessed Job going on to tell us his bountifulness in the boon of hospitality did right in bringing forward first his patience and kindness towards enemies, how that he did not 'exult in the destruction of his enemy;' that he did not 'assail his persecutors with words of cursing;' that those enraged against him within, he bore with equanimity; and then at last he brought forward the bountiful-

Gen. 4, 4. 5.

ness of his hospitality, that, namely, by the order of his relation being listened to, we might learn that exterior gifts are seasoned by the interior pureness of the heart, that the combination of his virtues might teach the reader what sort of person he ought to be in himself, when he administers external good to others.

29. But who would not account himself to be a holy man in the midst of such heights of his virtues? Who would not be in some measure tempted by his mere merits alone being so many in number, so that if at any time as being but man he went wrong, he would not have his transgression made known to men; and would account it as trivial if he did any thing wrong in lesser things; and would rather prefer to cover his offence by silence than disclose it by the voice of confession? For it often comes to pass that the mind being lifted up by virtuous attainments, when it knows that many good things are scattered abroad concerning it in the esteem of neighbours, does not wish it to be known, if there is any thing that it does deserving of blame. Which same darkness of mistaking the mind is for this reason exposed to, because high-swelling clogs the eye of the heart. Hence blessed Job, in the midst of so many distinguished achievements in virtues, who became so lofty in practice, in order to shew how lowly in mind he was, added directly;

If I covered my transgression as man, and did hide mine iniquity in my bosom.

30. For these are the proofs of true humility, both for a man to ascertain his own wickedness, and on being ascertained to discover it by the voice of confession; but on the contrary it is the accustomed evil practice of man's race, at once to commit sin keeping himself hidden from sight, and when committed to hide it by denying, and when brought home to him, to multiply it by standing up for it. For from that fall of the first man we draw these accessions of wickedness, from which we also draw the very original of sin. For thus he, when he had touched the forbidden tree, hid himself from the face of the Lord amidst the trees of Paradise. In which hiding, because surely he could not escape the eye of God, it is not the effecting of self-concealing that is related, but the affecting thereof is betokened. Who when he was charged

Job 31, 32. Hist. Gen. 3, 12. v. 13. by the Lord, how that he had touched of the forbidden tree, thereupon answered; *The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* The woman likewise on being asked, answered, saying, *The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.* For to this end they were enquired of, that the sin, which by transgressing they had been guilty of, they might by confessing wipe out. Whence too the serpent, that prompter, inasmuch as he was not to be brought back to pardon, was not asked concerning the sin. Thus man was asked the question 'where he was,' that he might review the offence committed, and by confessing it take knowledge how far he had departed from the face of his Creator. But both preferred to take to themselves the cordials of defence rather than of confession. And whilst the man was minded to palliate the sin through the woman, and the woman through the serpent, they added to the sin, which they endeavoured to vindicate; Adam by indirectly glancing at the Lord, how that He had Himself proved the author of their sin, in that He had made the woman; and Eve in referring the sin to the Lord, Who had placed the serpent in Paradise. For they who had heard from the mouth of the devil deceiving them, *Ye shall be as Gods;* because they were not able to be like to God in Godhead, for the heightening of their error endeavoured to make God like to themselves in transgression. In this way then, whilst they set themselves to defend their guilt, they made the addition that the sin should be rendered more heinous when examined, than it had been when committed.

v. 5.

31. Hence now also the branches of the human race derive bitterness still from this root, so that when a man is charged home for the evil in him, he hides himself under words of self-defence, as under a kind of leaves of trees, and as it were flies the face of his Creator to a kind of darkened retreats of self-exculpation, whereas he has no mind to have that known that he has been guilty of. By which same concealment he has not hidden himself from the Lord, but the Lord from himself. For he manages that he should not see Him Who sees all things, not that he himself should not be seen. Contrarily to every sinner the first step now of enlightenment is the humility of confessing, in that he now

refuses to spare himself, who does not blush to avow the evil that he has done, and he who by defending himself might have been laid open to be accused, by accusing himself defends himself most quickly. And hence to dead Lazarus, who was kept down by a great weight, it is not said, 'Be thou restored to life;' but, *Come forth*, by which same rising again, which was carried on in the body of that man, it is signified in what way we ourselves rise again in the heart, i. e. when it is said to the dead man, *Come forth;* that is to say, that man being dead in his sin, and through the mass of bad habit already buried, because he lies hidden from sight within his own conscience by wickedness, should go forth from himself without by confession. For to the dead man it is said, *Come forth*, that from the excusing and concealing of sin he may be called forth to come out to the accusing of himself with his own lips. Whence David the Prophet, in coming to life from that death of his great guilt, as it were went forth at the voice of the Lord, when being rebuked by Nathan he brought accusation of what he had done

Book XXII.

John 11, 43.

32. Therefore because this sin of concealing grew to a dreadful excess in the human race, blessed Job, when he was saying, *If I covered my transgression*, rightly inserted the words *as man*, because he sees that to be proper to man, which descends by the copying of our old parent. Whence it is fitly subjoined; *And did hide mine iniquity in my bosom.* For sacred Scripture is very often used to put the 'bosom' for the mind; as where in the voice of Holy Church it is said by the Psalmist of our persecutors, who are joined to us indeed in nature, but disjoined in life, *And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom.* As though he said in plain speech; 'Let them receive that in their minds, which in raging against us they practise over our bodies, that whereas they punish us outwardly in part, they may themselves be punished inwardly to a complete degree.' And so because the 'bosom' is interpreted the privacy of the mind, to 'conceal iniquity in the bosom' is to hide it in the recesses of the conscience, nor to uncover it by confession, but to veil it by defence. Contrarily James says, *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be saved.* Solomon also says, *He that covereth his*

Ps. 79, 12.

James 5, 16.

Prov. 28, 13.

Job 31, 34. Hist. motions it seeks that its aim, like a kind of most secret retreat, and there attaching itself to the Unchangeable[a], and mounting above all changeable things, by the mere calmness of its repose, while in the world, it is henceforth without the world. It goes beyond all things below by its stressing after the highest, and all the objects which it does not go after it feels itself by a certain liberty to get above, nor within is it subject to the tempest of things temporal, which it views without, for all earthly things which being longed after might have borne down the mind, being looked down upon lie beneath it. Whence it is well said by the Prophet, *Set a look out for thyself:* that whilst a man views things above, he may rise high above things beneath. Hence likewise Habakkuk says, *I will stand upon my watch.* For he 'stands upon his watch,' who by wise policy of discipline, does not bow down beneath, but rises high above earthly desires, that while he aims at Eternity, which is ever stedfast, he should have beneath his feet every thing that passes by.

Jer. 31, 21. Hab. 2, 1.

36. Yet because with whatever goodness the holy man has advanced, the infirmity of the flesh still outwardly bears him down whilst set in this life, as it is written, *Though man walk in the image of God, yet he is disquieted in vain:* it very often takes place that he is at once disquieted without, and holds on not subject to disquietude within, and that he is liable to be 'disquieted in vain' comes from the infirmity of the flesh, though that he 'walks in the image of God' is from the excellency of the mind, in order that he should both be inwardly strengthened by the Divine aid, and yet be still pressed down without by the human burthen. Whence Habakkuk again has well delivered a single sentence serving for both particulars. For he says, *And trembling entered into my bones, and my power*[1] *was disquieted underneath me.* As though he said; 'It is not my power, wherein being transported above, I remain free from liability to disquietude, but it is my own power wherein I am disquieted below.' And so the same is free from disquietude above himself, and the same exposed to disquietude below himself; because he had mounted above himself, in so far as he was

Ps. 39, 6.

Hab. 3, 16.

[1] virtus

[a] al. 'Unchangeably attached,' which however would be a hyperbolical xpression.

caught away to things on high; and he was beneath himself, in so far as he still dragged a remains into that which is below. The same above himself is free from liability to disquietude, because he had now passed away into the contemplation of God: the same under himself is liable to be disquieted, because beneath himself he still remained a frail human being. The Prophet David according with this sentence saith; *I said in the excess of my mind, All men are liars.* To whom the answer may be made; 'If every man, then thou too; and the sentence will henceforth be false, which thou being a liar hast uttered, because whilst thou art true-spoken, every man is not found out a liar.' But observe that it is prefaced, *I said in the excess of my mind.* And so by 'excess of the mind' he transcended himself even, when he determined about the character of man. As though he said in plain speech; 'I delivered a true sentence respecting the falseness of all men from the same cause, whereby I was myself above man;' being now so far himself a 'liar' as far as he was himself man, but so far altogether not a 'liar,' as 'by excess of the mind' he was above man.

Ps. 116, 11.

37. Thus, therefore, thus all the perfect, though they are still subject to something disquieting from the infirmity of the flesh, yet already enjoy within the calmest privacy by the contemplation of the mind, so that whatsoever thing happens without, it should in nought disquiet them within. Whence blessed Job, exhibiting the security of a holy mind, after he had delivered so many announcements of the parts of virtue with reference to himself, following that which we have set before, added; *If I feared at an exceeding great multitude, or the contempt of neighbours terrified me, and I did not rather keep silence, and went not out of the door.* As though he said in a plainer manner; 'While others were disquieted against me without, I myself remained in mine own self free from being disquieted within.' For what else ought we in this place to take 'the door' to be, but the mouth? For by this we as it were go forth, when with what words we are able, we disclose the secrets of our hearts; and what we remain within in the conscience, such we go forth without by the tongue.

Job 31, 34. Hist. 38. But there are some persons who are altogether afraid to be despised, and lest they should chance to be judged as contemptible, aim to appear wise. These are driven to 'go forth out of the door,' because when assailed with insults, how great in themselves they lie buried from sight, they give out telling it. And when being overcome by impatience they put forth things about themselves, which were unknown, they as it were 'go forth by the door' of the mouth. And so blessed Job being about to say, that he had never 'gone forth out of the door of the lips,' justly set before; *I kept silence;* i. e. because agitated by impatienee he would have gone forth out of the house of the conscience, if he had not known how to keep silence. For holy men, when they are under the trial of being perturbed, shun wholly and entirely to exhibit themselves to view, and when they cannot benefit those that hear them, they are willing by keeping silence to be even despised, lest they pride themselves upon the exhibition of their own wisdom. And when they say any thing with good understanding, they seek not their own glory, but the life of their hearers. But when they see that they cannot by speaking gain the life of their hearers, by keeping silence they hide their own knowledge. For we hie to the imitating the life of the Lord, as to a kind of mark set before us. For He Himself, because He saw that Herod sought not advancement, but that he desired to wonder at His signs or His knowledge, on being asked by him held His tongue, and because He kept silence with constancy, He went forth derided by him. For it is written; Luke23, 8. *And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad; for he was desirous to see Him of a long season, because he had heard many things of Him; and he hoped to have seen some* v. 9. *miracles done by Him:* where it is also added; *Then he questioned with Him in many words, but He answered him nothing.* But how greatly the Lord in holding His peace was despised, is shewn when the words are brought in there v. 11. directly; *And Herod with his men of war set Him at nought, and mocked Him.* Which same transaction we ought to hear and learn, in order that as often as our hearers desire to be made acquainted with things of ours, as things to be praised, and not to alter what is wrong of their

own, we should altogether hold our peace; lest, if we speak the Word of God with the design of display, both the fault of those persons, which then was, should not cease to be, and our own fault, which was not, should be brought to pass. Book XXII.

39. A person will perhaps say, 'How do we know with what feelings of the heart a man will hear?' But there are a number of things that bring to light the mind of him who hears; first and foremost, if our hearers both always praise what they hear, and never follow the thing that they praise. This vain glory of speaking the great Preacher had shunned, when he said, *For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as from God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.* For to 'corrupt the Word of God' is to think of Him otherwise than He is, or to seek from it not spiritual fruits, but the corrupt offspring of human praise. But 'to speak as of sincerity,' is not to seek for aught in Revelation beyond what behoves. Now he 'speaks as from God,' who knows that he himself hath not from himself, but that he hath received from God what he says. And he speaks 'before God,' who in all that he speaks seeks not human regards, but minds the presence of Almighty God, and who looks for, not his own glory, but the glory of his Creator. But he who indeed knows well that he has himself received from God the thing that he speaks, and yet in speaking seeks his own glory, speaks 'as from God,' but not 'before God,' because Him he considers as absent, Whom he does not set before his heart, when he preaches Him. But holy men at once 'speak as from God' and 'before God,' in that they both know that they have from Him the thing that they say, and they see that He is Himself present at their discoursings, their Judge and their Hearer. Hence it comes to pass, that whereas they know themselves to be set at nought by their neighbours, and that their words do not advantage the life of the persons hearing them, they hide from sight what great goodness they are of, lest if the speech delivered disclose the secret of the heart to no purpose, it should break forth into vain glory. 2 Cor. 2, 17.

40. Therefore blessed Job in the midst of stubborn hearts not aiming to shine forth by the disclosure of his virtue,

Job 31, 34. Hist. says, *And if the contempt of neighbours terrified me, and I did not rather keep silence, and went not out of the door.* For he who being stedfast through humility never feared to be despised, him never did impatience master, that the tongue should cast him forth out of doors. When it is rightly put first, *If I feared at an exceeding great multitude;* that it might be seen and known what great constancy he was of, in this respect, because no number of men ever terrifies without, whom no rout of bad habits lays waste within. For in this life he who seeks nothing that has to do with prosperity, doubtless dreads nothing that has to do with adversity.

Myst. 41. Which same words if we carry on to a mystical meaning, we directly find therein the Redeemer's mode of practice. For *He* was not 'afraid at an exceeding great multitude,' Who smote with a single answer only His persecutors coming John 18, 6. with swords and staves, saying, *I am He.* 'Him the contempt of His neighbours did not terrify,' Who, in freeing us from eternal punishments, received strokes on the face with a composed mind. '*He* kept silence, and did not go forth out of the door,' Who in the very hour now of His Passion, when He was undergoing the weak conditions of humanity, refused to call into action the power of Divinity. For to the Mediator between God and man it would have been 'to go forth out of the door,' if when He was held as Man He had been minded to display the power of His Majesty, and by the mightiness of His Divinity to surmount the weak conditions of the flesh taken upon Him. For that He might die manifest to man, 1 Cor. 2, 8. He remained hidden God. *For had they known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of Glory.* And so He did not 'go forth out of the door,' Who even when questioned by Pilate kept silence; and in the midst of the hands of the persecutors He both offered His Body to suffering, which He had taken upon Him in behalf of the Elect, and would not display to those that were against Him What He was. Ps. 88, 8. Whence also it is said by the Psalmist; *They have made Me an abomination unto them, I was given up, and I went not forth.* For when He was despised because He appeared man, He would have 'gone forth,' if He had been minded to display His hidden Majesty. But because He brought infirmity to

view, and hid power from sight, herein, that He remained unknown to His persecutors, to those persecutors He did not 'go forth.' Who, however, does 'go forth' to the Elect, because to those that seek for it, He discloses the sweetness of His Divine Nature. Whence it is said to Him by the Prophet, *Thou wentest forth for the salvation of Thy people, that Thou mightest save Thine Anointed.* It goes on: Book XXII. Hab. 3, 13.

Ver. 35. *Who would give me a helper that the Almighty might hear my desire.*

42. The holy man after he related so many high achievements of the virtues in him, knowing well that he cannot attain to the things on high by his own deserts, seeks for a helper. And whom verily does he fix his eye on but the Only-begotten Son of God, Who whereas He took upon Him human nature travailing in this mortal state, did give help? For *He* helped man, being made Man; that because to mere man there was no way open of returning to God, there should be made a Way of returning by means of The God-Man[1]. For we were far removed from the Righteous and Immortal One, being mortal and unrighteous. But between the Immortal and Righteous One and ourselves the mortal and unrighteous, appeared the Mediator of God and man, mortal and righteous, Who might at once own death with mortals, and righteousness with God; that whereas by our things below we were far removed from things above, He might in Himself singly unite the things below with the things above, and that herein there might be a Way made for us of returning to God, in the degree that He joined ours beneath with His own on high. This One then blessed Job, in his personating of the whole Church, asks for as Mediator, who when he had said, *Who would give me a helper*, suitably added, *that the Almighty might hear my desire.* For he knew that for the rest of Eternal deliverance, the prayers of man can never be heard excepting through his Advocate. Concerning Whom it is said by the Apostle John; *If any one sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.* Concerning Whom Paul likewise saith; *It is Christ Jesus that died for us, yea, rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right* xvii. Hist.

[1] Homo-Deus.

1 John 2, 1. 2.

Rom. 8, 34.

Job 31, 35. Hist. *hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us.* For, for the Only-begotten Son to 'intercede' for man, is to shew Himself Man in the presence of the Coeternal Father, and for Him to have besought for human nature, is to have taken upon Him that same nature in the loftiness of the Divine Nature. And so the Lord intercedes for us not with the voice but by the act of compassionating; because that which He would not should be condemned in the Elect, He set free by taking upon Himself. And so a helper is sought for, that 'the desire may be heard;' because except that the intercession of the Mediator were employed in our behalf, surely the accents of our prayers would remain silent to the ear of God.

43. Moreover it requires to be noted that it is not said, 'my prayers,' but, *my desire, that the Almighty might hear.* For true beseeching does not lie in the accents of the lips, but in the thoughts of the heart. For the stronger accents in the deepest ears of God it is not our words that make, but our desires. For if we seek eternal life with the mouth, but yet do not desire it with the heart, in crying out we keep silence. But if we desire in the heart, even when we are silent with the mouth, in being silent we cry out. It is hence that in the wilderness the people clamour with their voices, and Moses is still to the clamouring of words, and yet whilst keeping still he is heard by the ear of divine Pity, whereas it is said, *Wherefore criest thou unto Me?* Thus within in the desire is the secret cry, which does not reach to the ears of men, and yet fills the hearing of the Creator. It is hence that Anna going to the temple was silent indeed with the lips, and yet uttered so many accents of her desire. Hence the Lord says in the Gospel, *Enter into thy chamber, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father Which is in secret, and thy Father Which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.* For 'the door being shut he prays in his chamber,' who while his mouth is silent, pours forth the affection of the heart in the sight of the Pitifulness Above. And the voice is 'heard in secret,' when there is a crying out in silence by holy desires. Whence also it is rightly said by the Psalmist, *The Lord hath heard the desire of the poor; Thine ear hath heard the preparing of their heart.*

Exod. 14, 15.

Matt. 6, 6.

Ps. 10, 17.

Now blessed Job in the subjoined words discloses whom he seeks for himself as a helper, in the 'hearing of his desire,' saying, Book XXII.

And that he himself who judgeth would write a book!

44. For because to the People still fearing, the Law was committed by the hands of a Servant, but upon the loving Children, the grace of the Gospel was bestowed by the Lord, Who as coming for our Redemption, instituted the New Covenant for us, but in examining as touching the precept of that Covenant one day cometh as Judge also, it is not requisite that by explaining it should be made clear, that He Who Judges is the Same Who writes a book. For Truth Itself says by Itself, *The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.* And so He will then be the Enacter of judgment Who is now the Composer of the 'book;' that He should then demand in strictness, what He now bids in mildness. For thus we see every day that masters set children the rudiments of their letters caressing them, but exact those of them dealing hardly with them; and what they give with gentleness, they require back with the rod. For now the precepts of Divine Revelation sound gentle, but they shall be to be thought harsh in the exacting of them. Now, there is a gentle warning of One calling, but then there shall come the strict justice of the Judge, because it is certain that no whit even of the very least commandment will pass without scrutinizing. By which same it is apparent that He that 'judgeth is the Same That wrote the Book,' Which same 'Book' of the New Testament, that the Redeemer of man should Himself frame in His own Person at the last, the Prophet Ezekiel rightly tells forth, saying, *And behold six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn at his reins.* For what else is there denoted in the 'six men coming' but the six ages[a] of mankind? Who 'come from xviii. John 5, 22. Ez. 9, 2.

[a] St. Gregory's division of ages, Hom. in Ev. xix. §. 1. from Adam to Noah, Noah to Abraham, Abraham to Moses, Moses to Our Lord, and then to the end, will not suit this place. What is meant is probably that in St. Isidore of Seville, Etym. lib. v. c. 39. De discretione temporum, where two more divisions are made, at David, and the Captivity. He compares these ages to

Job 31, 36. Proph. the way of the higher gate,' because from the state of Paradise as from the beginning of the world, they are unwound from the upper generations. Which 'gate looks to the North' in this way, because the mind of man lying open to evil, except that, abandoning the warmth of charity, it had courted the numbness of the interior, would never have gone out to this breadth of mortality. *And every man a slaughter weapon in his hand;* because each particular generation being evolved by the several respective ages, before the Coming of the Redeemer, had in its practice that wherefrom it took the punishment of condemnation. *And one man among them was clothed with linen.* Because our Redeemer deigned to have parents even of the priestly Tribe[b] after the flesh, He is described as coming 'clothed with linen.' Or, surely, because linen is from the earth, and is not like wool produced from the corruptible flesh, seeing that He derived the covering of His Body from a Virgin mother, and not by the corruptness of copulation, therefore He came to us 'clothed with linen.' *And a writer's inkhorn at his reins.* In the 'reins' is the hind part of the body. And because the Lord Himself after that He died for our sakes, and rose again, and ascended up into heaven, then wrote the New Testament through the Apostles, this man had an 'inkhorn at his reins.' For He Who after He departed framed the writing of the New Testament, as it were, carried an 'inkhorn' behind him. Thus this 'inkhorn' he sees to hold fast to the man 'clothed with linen,' who says, *And that the same who judges would write a book.* But wherefore, blessed Job, desirest thou that a book should be written by Him, Who is Judge? It goes on;

Ver. 36. *That I might bear it upon my shoulder, and put it round me like a crown.*

xix. 45. To 'bear the book upon the shoulder,' is by practising to carry out Holy Scripture. And observe how orderly it is described both first as being 'carried on the shoulder,' and afterwards 'put round' him 'as a crown;' because, that is

the days of Creation. The same division is given in the beginning of his Chronicon.

[b] 'Tribu,' perhaps 'nation,' but Elisabeth, 'of the daughters of Aaron,' was a kinswoman of the Blessed Virgin. Luke 1, 5. and 36.

to say, the precepts of Sacred Revelation, if they be now borne in practice, afterwards set forth for us the crown of victory in the recompensing. But why does blessed Job beg for 'the book to be written by the Judge,' who was not able to attain to the times of the New Testament? But, as has been often said already, he uses the accents of the Elect, and in the personifying of them begs that, which he foresaw would benefit them in all respects. For he himself by the Spirit had for long had that book with him, which by the grace of Inspiration he had obtained, that both by living he should be made acquainted with, and by foreseeing he should announce. BOOK XXII.

But herein it requires to be known that when we take thought of the precepts of Sacred Revelation, and when we draw off the mind from love of the life of corruption, we as it were hasten on by a kind of footsteps of the heart, to the interior scene of things. Now no man, in abandoning things below, is directly made at the top; because for earning the title to perfection, whilst the soul is day by day being led forward on high, doubtless there is an attaining thereto as it were by a kind of steps of ascending. Whence in this place also it is fitly added;

By my several steps I will declare it.

46. Since concerning these 'steps' of merits it is said by the Psalmist, *They go from virtue to virtue.* Concerning these, again, regarding Holy Church he says; *God is distinguished in her steps, what time He shall receive her.* For neither is there any attaining suddenly to things above, as has been said, but to the topmost pitch of virtuous attainments the soul is led on by accessions. For hence it is that the same Prophet saith again; *I was exercised, and my spirit failed little by little.* What does he mean, then, that he says, *my spirit*, but the spirit of man, i. e. the spirit of exaltation? And because by secret grace we advance to the love of God by a measure regulated from above, in proportion as virtue is daily increased in us by the Spirit of God, our own spirit proportionably goes off. Which spirit of error, because it is not at once cut clean away from us, is justly recorded to have 'failed little by little.' But we then make complete advance in God, when we have wholly and XX. Ps.84,7. Ps.48,3. not as V. Ps.77,3.

Job 31, 36. Hist. entirely fallen away from ourselves. Thus these measures of growing virtues by the words of the holy man are styled 'steps.' For every elect person sets out from the tenderness of his embryo in the first instance, and afterwards comes to firmness for strong and vigorous achievements. Which thing Truth plainly shews in the Gospel, saying, *So is the kingdom of heaven, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up he knoweth not how.* Which same seed describing the growths of He adds; *For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.* The end of whose progress too he also makes to succeed, saying, *But when it has brought forth the fruits from itself, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.* Observe, by the voice of Truth the accessions of merits are marked out by the characters of fruits. For He says, *first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.* Was not Peter still a 'blade' then, when by the mouth of a maid he was in a moment bent down by the blast of a single speech, already green indeed through devotedness, but still tender through infirmity. But he was found 'full corn in the ear' when he withstood the rulers persecuting him, saying, *We ought to obey God rather than men.* For he was found 'full corn in the ear' when, in the winnowing of persecution, he underwent such numberless wounds, but yet he was never made small after the manner of chaff, but continued whole grain. For little by little in each several soul, so to say, the moisture of interior grace abounds, that the blade may grow into fruit. So let no one when he sees any neighbour still a 'blade' despair of the 'full corn.' Since from the leaves of the blades, which hang softly, flowing hither and thither, the rising grains of fruitage come to firmness.

Mark 4, 26—29.

Acts 5, 29.

47. Now the Prophet Daniel, whereas, when the Lord was speaking to him, he made it his business to tell us the posture of his body, did rightly represent these stages of merits. Thus he says; *Yet heard I the voice of his words, and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I dismayed upon my face, and my face clave to the ground. And, behold, a hand touched me, which set me upon my*

Dan. 10, 9—12.

knees, and upon the joints of my hands. And he said, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright; for unto thee am I now sent: and when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling; and he said unto me, Fear not. Which same posture of his body, whilst he was listening to the words of one speaking inwardly, he would never set forth to us with so much pains, if he had known it to be void of mysteries. For in Sacred Writ not only what holy men say is prophecy, but also very often what they do. Thus the holy man, being pregnant with interior mysteries, by the posture of his body, likewise represents the power of the voice; and by this that he first lay prostrate on the earth, by this that he afterwards set himself up on the joints of his hands and on his knees, by this that at last he stood fast erect indeed, yet trembling, he makes known to us in his own person all the order of our progress. For the words of God we hear 'lying on the ground,' when being settled in our sins, allied to earthly pollution, we are made acquainted with spiritual precepts from the voice of the Saints. At which precepts, we are as it were set up upon our knees and the joints of our hands, because withdrawing ourselves from earthly defilements, we as it were henceforth lift up our mind from things below. For as he wholly cleaves to the ground, who lies dismayed, so he who is bent down upon his knees and the joints of his fingers, his advancement commencing, is already in a great measure hung aloft from earth. But at the last by the voice of the Lord we stand there erect indeed, yet trembling, in that being perfectly lifted up from earthly objects of desire, the more fully we know the words of God, the more we are afraid. For he as it were still lies prostrate on the ground, who by desires after the earthly cares nothing to be lifted up to the heavenly. But it is as if he being lifted up still 'rested upon his hands and knees,' who already forsakes some defilements, but does not yet withstand some earthly practices. But he now stands there present erect at the words of God, who perfectly lifts up the mind to things aloft, and scorns to be bent down by impure desires.

Book XXII.

48. Now he rightly shews that he 'stood trembling;' because the scrutiny of interior exactness is the more fear-

Job 31, 36. Hist. fully dreaded, the more advanced the progress in respect thereto. Where it is fitly subjoined by the voice of God, *Fear not;* because the more that we ourselves learn what we should have occasion to fear, the more we have infused in us from God by interior grace what may call for love, so that both our contempt little by little may pass away into fear, and fear pass away into charity; that wherein God when He seeks us, by contempt we withstand, and by fear flee from, both contempt and fear being one day set aside, we should be joined to Him by love only. For little by little we learn even the very fear of Him [e], to the love of Whom only we are attached. And thus as it were there being placed a kind of steps of our advance, the foot of the mind first by fear we set below, and afterwards by charity lift it to the heights of love, that from that wherewith a man is puffed up he may be checked, so that he fear, and from that, which he now dreads he may be lifted up, that he may have boldness. Now these steps of virtuous attainments it is no great labour to lay hold of, since there is the passing from one to another.

49. But the subject requires the nicest handling, when the mind strives to estimate in the case of one and the same virtue with what steps of advancement it is lifted up. For to mention the first elements of virtue, i. e. faith and wisdom, they cannot be severally gained, except we ascend thereto by marked and ordered methods as by a kind of steps. For faith itself which imbues us for taking in hand in a perfect manner what else there is good, very often in its beginnings both totters and is firmly based, and it is now held most surely, and yet touching the assurance thereof there is still trembling under the effects of misgiving. For a part of it is received first, that it may be afterwards perfectly completed in us. For if there were not an advancing by a sure step in the mind of one who believes, the father of the child to be healed would not have said on being ques-
Mark 9, 24. tioned, in the Gospel, *Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief.* And so he was still ascending upwards as to the faith which he had already received, who at one and the same time both

[e] The readings vary. The Ben. Editor seems not to have seen that noticed in the Italian reprint, which is also in the Merton and Trin. Coll. MSS. and others at Oxford, 'Eum timere dediscimus, eique vi solius &c.' 'we unlearn fearing Him, and are attached to Him by the force of love alone.'

cried out that he already believed and still doubted from unbelieving. Hence it is also that it said to our Redeemer by His disciples, *Increase our faith*, that that which had been already received in beginning, might by the accessions of steps arrive at perfection. Book XXII. Luke 17, 5.

50. Moreover Wisdom herself, who is required to be the mistress of good works, is vouchsafed to the panting soul by degrees of increase, that surely the ascending thereto should be by the steps of wonderful regulation. Which same the Prophet Ezekiel well describes in a figurative relation, who concerning that man whom he had seen on a high mountain tells, saying, *He measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the water up to the ancles; again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the water up to the knees; again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the water up to the reins. Afterward he measured a thousand, and it was a torrent that I could not pass over, for there swelled deep waters of a torrent, which could not be passed over.* Ez. 47, 3—5. For what is denoted by the number of a 'thousand,' but the fulness of the benefit vouchsafed? Thus the man who appeared 'measures a thousand cubits,' and the Prophet is led through the waters 'up to the ancles,' because our Redeemer, when to us on our being converted to Him He bestowed the fulness of a good beginning, bathed the first treadings of our practice by the gift of spiritual wisdom. For the water's reaching up to the ancle is our henceforth maintaining the treadings of longed-for righteousness by wisdom being vouchsafed to us. Again, he 'measures a thousand cubits,' and the Prophet is led through the water 'up to the knees,' because when the fulness of good practice is bestowed, our wisdom is increased even to this degree, that there is not henceforth any bending in bad deeds. Thus it is hence said by Paul, *Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight steps with your feet.* Heb. 12, 12. Thus 'the water reaches to the knees,' when the wisdom that is is obtained perfectly braces us to uprightness of good practice. And again, he 'measures a thousand,' and the Prophet is 'led through the water up to the reins' in this way, because the fulness of good practice then grows to a height in us, when the wisdom vouchsafed

Job 31, 36. Hist. has killed in us as far as it is possible all the gratification of the flesh as well. For except the gratification of the flesh was seated in the reins, the Psalmist would never have said, Ps.2,26. *Burn my reins and my heart.* Therefore the water comes up 'to the reins,' when the sweetness of wisdom destroys the very incitements of the flesh too, so that the burnings of the flesh that might have scorched up the soul are cooled down. And he still further 'measured a thousand,' 'and it was a torrent which the Prophet could not pass,' of which he also says, *Because there swelled deep waters of a torrent, which could not be passed over.* For perfectness of practice having been received, we come to contemplation; in which same contemplation while the mind is carried up on high, being uplifted it sees in God that the thing that it sees it cannot fathom, and as it were it touches the water of the torrent, which it cannot pass through, because at once it beholds in gazing what it may be pleased to behold, and yet is not able perfectly to behold that very thing that it pleases. And so the Prophet sooner or later comes to the water 'which he cannot pass through,' because when we are at last brought to the contemplation of wisdom, the mere immensity thereof, which by itself lifts man to itself, denies the human mind a full acquaintance, so that it should at once by touching love this wisdom, and yet never by passing through penetrate it.

51. Thus blessed Job called these increasings of virtues by the title of 'steps,' because he saw them to be in distinct divisions, bestowed on men by gift from above; seeing that by them only do we ascend so as to come to the attaining of heavenly things. And so in making mention of the Sacred Book, i. e. of Divine Revelation, he says; *By my several steps I will declare it,* in this way surely, because he really ascends to the teaching of God, who has broken forth to the attaining thereof by the steps of holy practice. And he as it were 'by his several steps declares the book' who proves that he has been vouchsafed the knowledge of it not in respect of words only, but also of deeds. Whence it is yet further added;

And as to a prince I will offer it.

For every thing that we offer, we hold in our hands. And

so 'unto the Prince' coming to Judgment 'to offer the book' is to have held the words of His precepts in our behaviour. It proceeds;

Ver. 38—40. *If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain: if I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have afflicted the soul of the tillers thereof; let the thistle grow for me instead of wheat, and the thorn instead of barley.*

52. For what is it for the 'land to cry,' for 'the furrows to weep,' and to have 'eaten one's own fruits buying them?' To whom is it necessary to buy what is his own? who has heard 'the land crying?' Who has seen 'the furrows weeping?' And whereas the furrows of the land are always of the land, why is it that by a separate declaration it is both said that the land did not cry, and that the furrows thereof did not weep along with it? For whereas a furrow of the earth is nothing else but earth, it does not need the accounting of much difference, that he adds; *And along with it the furrows thereof weep.* In which same point because the order of the history falls to the ground, the mystical meaning displays itself to us, the doors as it were being now set open. As though it exclaimed in plain speech; 'Whereas ye know that the reasonableness of the letter has dropped dead, doubtless it remains that ye should fall back to me without misgiving. For every one who either by private right rules a domestic household, or for the common advantage is set over faithful multitudes, herein that he possesses the rights of government over the faithful committed to him, what else does he but hold the land to cultivate it? Since it is for this end that each individual is advanced above the rest, by Divine distribution, that the mind of those under him, like land subdued, may be made fruitful by the seed of his preaching. But 'the land crieth against' its possessor, if it chance that against him, who is set at the head, either a private family, or Holy Church utters any just murmur. Since for 'the land to cry,' is for those under charge to grieve with reason against the injustice of him who rules them; where it is rightly subjoined, *And along with it the furrows thereof weep.* For the land even when not cultivated by any works generally produces something of suste- XXI. ALLEG.

Job 31, 38—40. ALLEG.

nance for the service of man, but when ploughed it bears fruits to superabundance. And there are some persons, who not being cleft by any ploughshare of reading, or any of exhortation, do yet of themselves produce some good things, though but the least, like land not yet ploughed up. But there are some who for always hearing and retaining, applying themselves to holy preachings and meditations, as it were cleft with a kind of ploughshare of the tongue, as to the former hardness of the heart, receive the seed of exhortation, and by the furrows of voluntary chastening render the fruits of good practice. But it is very often the case that those who are set at the head do things unjust, and it comes to pass that the very persons injure those under them, who were bound to do them good. Which when uninstructed persons see, being enraged they murmur against their ruler, and yet do not by sympathy grieve violently for their neighbours. But when these who are already broken in pieces by the plough of reading, and dressed for the fruitage of practice, see innocent persons borne down even in the least things, they are forthwith turned by sympathy to tears of sorrow, because they bewail as their own the things that their neighbours suffer unjustly. For the perfect, whereas they are ever affected with regard to what is spiritual, are taught to lament for the bodily hurts of others, so much the more in proportion as they are now instructed not to lament for their own. And so every one who is set in authority, if he executes what is bad in the case of those under him, 'the earth crieth against him and the furrows weep,' because against his injustice the uninstructed peoples indeed break out in accents of murmuring, while all the perfect severally chasten themselves in tears for his wicked practice, and for what the inexperienced cry out and do not grieve, those under authority of a more tried life bewail and hold their peace. And so for 'the furrows to bewail along with the land crying out,' is by that thing whereas the multitude of the faithful complains with justice against the ruler, for persons of a more fruitful life to be brought to tears of sorrow. Thus the furrows are both of the earth, and yet are distinguished from the term of 'the earth,' because those in Holy Church, who cultivate their mind with the labour of holy meditation, are

as much better than the rest of the faithful, in proportion as by the seeds received they render more abundant fruits of deeds. And there are some who being set over holy peoples obtain the payments of livelihood by the bountifulness of the Church, but do not pay the ministrations of exhortation that are due. In opposition to whom the example of the holy man is yet further subjoined aright, when it is directly added by him; Book XXII.

If I have eaten the fruit thereof without money.

53. For to 'eat the fruit of the land without money' is to receive indeed our charges from the Church, but not to yield to that Church the price of preaching. Of which same preaching it is said by the voice of the Creator, *Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.* And so he 'eats the fruits of the earth without money,' who receives the Church's benefits for the service of the body, but does not pay to the people the ministry of exhortation. What do we pastors say to these things, who while we are the forerunners of the Advent of the Strict Judge, take upon us the function of a herald indeed, but devour the Church's supplies with dumb mouths? We exact all that is owed to our own body, but we do not pay back what we owe to the soul of those committed to our charge. Mark how the holy man, tied down by so many pledges in this world, in the midst of numberless employments, was free for the pursuit of preaching. And he never 'ate the fruits of the earth without money,' because surely he paid back the word of good warning to those under his charge, from whom he received the fruit of bodily serving. For this every one who is set over the people owes to Almighty God, he who is set over many, and he who is set over a smaller number, that he should in such sort exact the due ministration from those subject to him, that he may himself mind with heedful regard what of warning he at all times owes. For all we who subject to the appointment of the Creator are joined amongst ourselves by a vicarious ministry in obedience to our true Lord, what else are we but servants to one another? Whereas, then, he who is subordinate serves in obeisance, assuredly it remains that he who is set over him should serve to the xxii. Matt. 25, 27.

Job 31, 40. Allegor. word. Whereas he who is subordinate yields obedience to orders, it is required that he who is at the head should bestow the care and concern of solicitude and of pity. And so it comes to pass, that whilst we studiously endeavour to serve one another now by charity, we may one day rule together with the true Lord in common rejoicing. But there are some, who herein, that they discharge the office of preaching, grudge others the good that they have, and so do not any longer have it in a true sense. To whom it is rightly James 3, 14. 15. said by James, *But if ye have bitter envying among yourselves, and strife in your hearts, this wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.* Hence here also when it is said, *If I have eaten the fruits thereof without money*, it is rightly subjoined;

Or have afflicted the soul of the tillers thereof.

xxiii. 54. For they are the 'tillers' of the land, who, being placed in a lower situation, with what earnestness they are able, with the best practice that they can, cooperate in the grace of preaching to the instructing of Holy Church. Which same 'husbandmen of this land' not to afflict, is this, viz. not to envy their labours; that the ruler of the Church, while he vindicates to himself alone the right of preaching, should not, by envy gnawing him, gainsay others also that preach in a right way. For the religious mind of the pastor, because it seeks not its own glory but the glory of the Creator, desires to have all that it does aided by all persons. For the faithful preacher wishes, if it might be brought to pass, that the truth which he is not able to give utterance to alone, the mouths of all should sound out. Whence when Joshua would have withstood the two who remained in the camp and prophesied, it is rightly said by Moses, *Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!* For he was willing for all to prophesy, in that he envied not others the good that he had. Thus because blessed Job introduced all these things as under suspension, and if he had not done them, binds himself with the sentence of cursing, it goes on;

Numb. 11, 29.

Ver. 40. *Let the thistle grow for me instead of wheat, and the thorn instead of barley.*

55. As though he said in plain words; 'If I have done aught unjust towards those under me, if I have exacted the debts due to me, and have not myself paid what I owed, if I have envied others the executing of good practice, for the good things which refresh for ever and ever, may evil things that sting be repaid me in the Judgment.' Since 'instead of the wheat there springs up the thistle, and instead of barley the thorn,' when in the final Retribution, wherefrom the recompensing of our labour is looked for, the piercing of pain is met with. And observe, that as barley is different from wheat, though both regale, so the thorn differs from the thistle, though either be a thing that pricks, because the thistle is softer, and the thorn always the harder as to pricking. Thus he says, *Let the thistle grow instead of wheat, and the thorn instead of barley.* As if he said plainly and openly; I know indeed that I have both done great good acts and lesser ones; and if it is not so, may lesser evils match me for my great good acts, and the greater evils for the lesser good ones.' Though this may also be understood in another sense. For in 'wheat' there is denoted in spiritual action which regales the mind, but in 'barley' the disposal of earthly things. Wherein while we are often forced to serve the weak and carnal, we as it were prepare their food for the beasts of burthen, and the very practice of our deeds after the manner of barley has somewhat of a mixture of chaff. And it very often happens, that the ruler who is set at the head, while he enforces what is unjust against those under his charge, while he cheers not the good with any soothing, whilst, that which is more grievous, all those acting rightly he distresses out of envy, still some good things he sometimes does, as if he sowed corn, and mixed in the disposing of earthly things at times not in the passion of avarice, but for the use of the carnal, and so looks for the fruit of that labour as a crop of barley. But the several persons under his charge, in consideration of this, that they are borne hard upon in the chief things, cannot feel joy in his lesser good things; because neither is this practice well pleasing in the sight of God, which is defiled by the injustice of other practice, nor yet is the very disposal of earthly things

Job 31, 40. believed to be undertaken for the service of those under his charge, when he who is over them is seen to pant with avarice.

Alleg. Whence it happens that even in answer to the few good things themselves, which they see to be done in the midst of a multitude of evil ones, they give back not praises but groans, and that those that go weakly murmur, while they take thought that that which they see is not a thing of pure practice. And so he says, *If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain; if I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have afflicted the soul of the tillers thereof: let the thistle grow instead of wheat, and the thorn instead of barley.* As if he said plainly, 'If the great things which I owed I have not heedfully performed, may I receive the prickings of murmuring from those under me, even with reference to the good that I have done. If I have omitted to set forth what might cheer, may their tongue springing forth into complaint with justice pierce me.'

56. Wherein it requires always to be minded with heedful consideration, that neither they that are set at the head offer examples of bad practice to those under them, and kill the life of those by the sword of their evil doing, nor they that are subject to the control of another presume to judge lightly the deeds of their rulers, and from this, that they utter murmurs touching those who are placed over them, set themselves not against a human appointment but against that Divine Appointment, which disposes all things. For to those

Ez. 34, 19. it is said, *And as for My flock they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet: they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet.* For 'the sheep drink what is fouled with the feet,' when those under charge for example of living seek after things, which the persons over them severally corrupt by bad practice. But on the other hand these persons hear

Ex. 16, 8. from those in command; *And what are we? Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord.* For he that murmurs against power established over him, it is plain reproves Him Who gave that power to man.

At length, God vouchsafing it, we have explored those sentences of blessed Job, full of mystical force, in which he

made answer to the words of his friends. Now it remains that we come to the words of Elihu, which are to be weighed with so much the graver caution, in proportion as they are also put forward through the boldness of youth with a hotter spirit. Book XXII.

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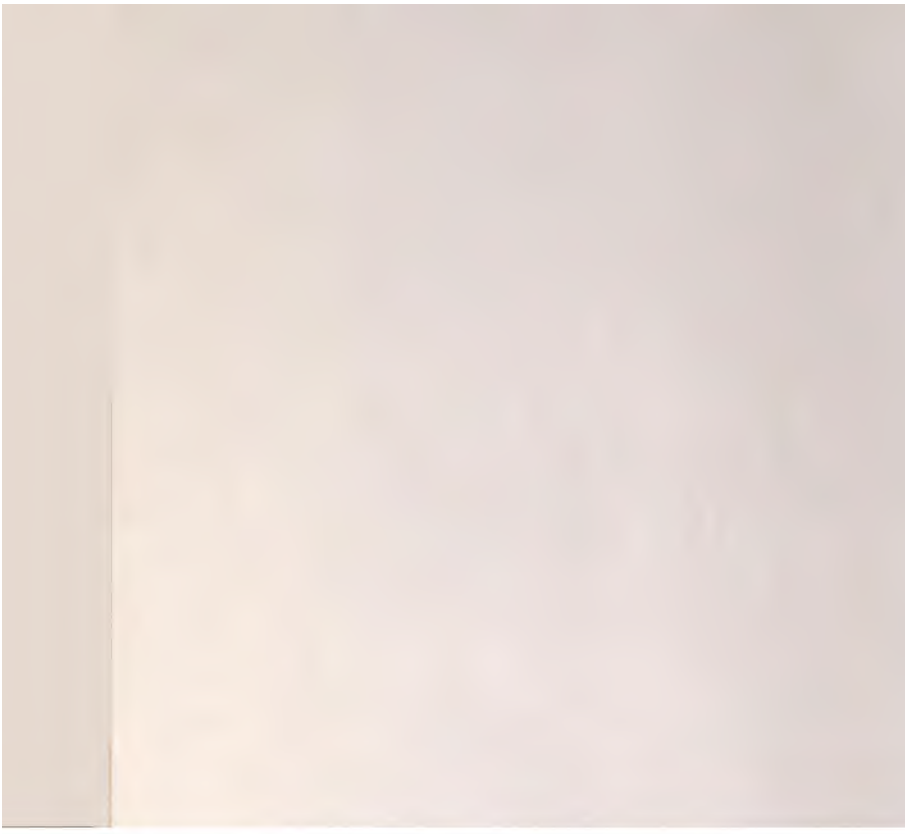

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